

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

1960-61 TARIFF CONFERENCE
Tariff Negotiations Committee

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING IN ORDINARY SESSION

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 19 January 1962, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. E. Wyndham White

- Subjects discussed:
1. Arrangements for the conclusion of tariff negotiations
 2. Report of the Legal Drafting Group (TN.60/18)

1. Arrangements for the conclusion of tariff negotiations

The Chairman expressed the hope that, following certain new developments, realistic arrangements could be made for the conclusion of the general round of tariff negotiations.

The representative of the Commission of the EEC said that his delegation had reached an agreement in principle with the United States during the past few days. Although some difficulties still remained to be solved, his delegation wished to conclude this negotiation as soon as possible. In the meanwhile, other negotiations had continued and all necessary preparatory work had now been done. These negotiations would be continued so that they could be concluded at the soonest possible date. It was not possible to be more specific as progress depended not only on his delegation but on those delegations with whom they were negotiating.

The representative of the United States confirmed that agreement in principle had been reached with the EEC which was believed to be mutually satisfactory. His delegation hoped during the next two weeks to bring six remaining negotiations to the point of initialling, although this would depend on the availability of other delegations. There had not yet been any agreement in principle with one delegation, that of Spain, but he saw no real difficulties in this connexion and hoped that this negotiation could be concluded in a brief period. He noted that in any case the results of this negotiation were to be in a separate protocol and any delay would not affect the general protocol.

The representative of Canada reported that his delegation had concluded negotiations with Israel, Portugal, Spain and the United States. Their only remaining negotiation was with the EEC under Article XXIV:6. It had been difficult to conclude this as, for Canada, an agreement depended on the conclusion of negotiations between the United States and the EEC. He expressed the hope that an agreement could now be reached fairly rapidly. On one product of interest to his delegation the agreement between the United States and the EEC was not satisfactory from Canada's point of view. His delegation, however, hoped to conclude an agreement with the EEC in the next two weeks.

He asked for some indication on the length of time which might be expected to elapse between the completion of bilateral negotiations and the preparation of schedules embodying the result of the Conference, the checking of these by other delegations and the signature of the Protocol.

The Chairman said that two elements entered into a calculation on the problem to which the representative of Canada had referred. A reasonable time would be necessary in order to allow those countries who had suspended their negotiations until the results of negotiations between the United States, the United Kingdom and the EEC could be seen, to resume and to conclude their negotiations. Secondly, he suggested that past experience indicated that a period of about three weeks would be necessary for the full circulation and checking of the results of negotiations. He expressed the hope that, as a result of the present meeting, it would be possible to make an estimate of the total length of time involved.

The representative of Uruguay pointed out that the end of the Conference was approaching and said that he would therefore like to raise a point of particular interest to his delegation. He recalled that on 24 June 1961 Uruguay had come to an agreement with the EEC on its negotiations under Article XXIV:6. In this agreement, in view of the fact that results on frozen and chilled beef had not been satisfactory to Uruguay, his delegation had reserved the right to withdraw substantially equivalent concessions on items which had originally been negotiated with member countries of the EEC. The EEC had agreed to abstain from similar action. In an exchange of notes his delegation had expressed the hope that additional offers would be made by the EEC and in reply the EEC had expressed the hope that this problem could be solved before the expiry of the time-limit for the withdrawal of concessions. His delegation had been informed that yesterday the EEC had sent a communication on this subject to them. His delegation were not yet able to comment on this communication but were somewhat disturbed that the Conference might come to an end before a satisfactory agreement could be reached. If this were the case, his delegation must be able to withdraw substantially equivalent concessions. He asked for a specific ruling from the Tariff Negotiations Committee on this problem.

The Chairman said that, although the Committee was in sight of the end of the Tariff Conference, it was clear that the Tariff Negotiations Committee would meet again and he suggested that it would be possible for the Committee to deal with the question raised by the representative of Uruguay at that time.

The representative of Norway asked if it would be possible to have more information on the agreement which had been reached between the United States and the EEC.

The representative of the United States said that his delegation wished to preserve the general rule that the contents of an agreement should not be made known until it was formally concluded. His delegation was, however, prepared to inform countries with a direct interest of concessions which had been offered by the United States to the EEC.

The representative of Norway pointed out that any approach to this question which was too formalistic might delay the conclusion of the "Dillon" round.

The Chairman said that some idea of a feasible timetable had perhaps emerged from the discussions. The representative of the United States had estimated that two weeks would be necessary to clear up technical problems on the agreement with the EEC and for the conclusions of six other outstanding negotiations. The Chairman suggested that a further three weeks beyond that date would be needed for the conclusion of negotiations which had been suspended pending the outcome of negotiations between the United States, the United Kingdom and the EEC. If this were a realistic estimate, a period of five weeks should therefore be allowed for the remaining bilateral negotiations and the communication of the results to the secretariat. Negotiations connected with the accession of Spain could be considered separately. Allowing three weeks for checking and the establishment of legal texts, he estimated that the Protocol might be opened for signature in about eight weeks.

The representative of the Commission of the EEC said that his delegation accepted the new target of five weeks before the conclusion of bilateral negotiations, but pointed out that this would depend not only upon his delegation but upon the delegations - about seventeen - with whom they were negotiating.

The Chairman said that, while the question of the accession of Spain could be considered separately, it was to be hoped that all interested delegations would be able to conclude negotiations for Spain's accession before the end of the Tariff Conference.

It would be necessary for the Tariff Negotiations Committee to meet again at least once. The date of the next meeting would be announced after consultation with delegations.

The representative of Canada recalled that his delegation had been given authority to renegotiate some items under Article XXVIII:4. A relatively large number of products was involved although these were not of great economic importance. There was, for his delegation, some urgency on this problem and he asked for the co-operation of other interested delegations as far as this was possible.

2. Report of the Legal Drafting Group (TN.60/18)

The Chairman, introducing the report in the absence of the Chairman and Alternate Chairman of the Legal Drafting Group, asked if the draft protocol for the accession of Cambodia, contained in paragraph 1, was acceptable. He pointed out that the Cambodian delegation had requested that 1 September 1960, the opening date of the Tariff Conference, should be taken as the base date for the margins of preference of Cambodia.

The draft protocol for the accession of Cambodia and the base date of 1 September 1960 were approved.

The Chairman said that the Legal Drafting Group would present a draft protocol and a draft decision for the accession of Spain at a later date.

The Committee adopted the drafting changes in the general protocol and protocols of accession of Israel and of Portugal contained in paragraph 2 of document TN.60/18.

The Chairman asked if the proposed insertions in the schedules of the European Economic Community and its member States, set out in paragraph 3 of document TN.60/18, were approved. They were approved and the Chairman said that he assumed that the Commission would in due course take the necessary steps for the inclusion of these insertions in their schedule. The representative of Canada wished to express his appreciation of the fact that with the collaboration of all concerned this question had been settled in a very satisfactory manner.