

INTERIM COMMISSION FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

REPORT OF AD HOC WORKING GROUP
ON THE SWISS QUESTION

1. The Working Group came to the conclusion at its first meeting that the decision of the Havana Conference "to invite the Swiss Government to participate in a study of the problems facing the Swiss economy..." could best be carried out by arranging for their governments to appoint a number of experts to conduct an inquiry, under the direction of the Working Group, into the special problems relating to the possible adherence of Switzerland to the Havana Charter, having special regard to the problems connected with the Swiss economy.
2. It was arranged that the Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. M. Suetens, should meet the representative of the Swiss Government, Mr. Walter Stucki, to discuss this proposal with him and to mention that the Swiss Government would be invited to nominate a person, who is au fait with the present circumstances and future possibilities of the Swiss economy, to join the experts and to assist in their study. The Working Group envisaged that the report of the experts would be completed early in 1949; and the Working Group would then meet again to examine the report and to decide on its presentation to the Third Session of the Executive Committee.
3. At the second meeting the Chairman reported that he had discussed the Working Group's proposal with the representative of the Swiss Government who had said that he could not assist in an inquiry into the circumstances of the Swiss economy which would be conducted on Swiss soil and which would involve a questioning of Swiss officials, nor could he participate in an inquiry upon the advantages and disadvantages for Switzerland of joining the ITO; he had said that Switzerland was not asking for favours and therefore could not be placed in the position of a petitioner and still less as being on the defensive. On the other hand, it was the desire of Switzerland to observe the decision of the Havana Conference and to cooperate accordingly; he thought that the problem had been thoroughly discussed at Havana, but if there were some considerations or facts or figures which had been overlooked, for example, questions relating to the trade in goods of a luxury character, the Swiss Government would be pleased to supply information in response to questions submitted in writing.
4. It was the general desire of the Working Group to continue its endeavour to carry out a study on the lines envisaged in the Havana decision, but it seemed advisable to ascertain whether the Swiss Government would be willing to supply the information which the Working Party considered to be the minimum required to enable it to arrive at conclusions and to make recommendations of value. Accordingly,

two members of the Group undertook to prepare a sample set of the questions which might be addressed to the Swiss Government. This "sample" was discussed at the third meeting of the Working Group and approved as a basis on which the Chairman could personally sound the representative of the Swiss Government at a meeting which had been arranged for Wednesday, 15th September.

5. The Working Group requests authority to continue its work and to report to the Third Session of the Executive Committee.

Note:

The Executive Committee, at the meeting held on 15th September, approved the request of the Working Group in paragraph 5 of its report and authorized it to continue its work with the following terms of reference:

The Executive Committee empowers the Working Group on the Swiss question to continue its examination of the problems referred to it with a view to submitting its report to the Executive Committee at the Third Session; the Working Group is authorized to discuss the various aspects of the question with representatives designated by the Swiss Government, and may also take appropriate measures to obtain expert advice.