

SIXTH COMMITTEE: ORGANIZATION

WORKING PARTY TO CONSIDER THE QUESTION OF AN INTERIM COMMISSION FOR  
THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

NOTES UPON THE FOURTH MEETING

Held 13 February 1948 at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. COLBAN (Norway)

The Working Party first considered the question of the relative advantages of Lake Success and Geneva as the place of the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Interim Commission. A document had been circulated by the Executive Secretary upon this question since the last meeting of the Working Party (see document E/CONF.2/C.6/W.89).

The representative of the United States in the light of the information contained in this document reiterated his support for Lake Success. One additional reason in favour of Lake Success was the fact that a considerable number of Members of the United Nations had permanent delegations in New York or had delegations frequently travelling there for the purpose of the sessions of the Economic and Social Council. As a matter of convenience these might be used to attend the meetings of the Executive Committee.

The representative of France, supported by the representative of Canada, contended that the impression given by the document circulated by the Executive Secretary was somewhat misleading and he advanced various reasons to show that Geneva should be selected rather than Lake Success. One such reason was the time spent in travelling to attend meetings at Lake Success, another the fact that he did not consider it would be advisable for delegations which were present in New York for another purpose to cover the meetings of the Executive Committee. He suggested that the Working Party should agree that in principle the meetings of the Executive Committee should be held at Geneva.

The representative of the United Kingdom said that he would agree that initially the secretariat of the Executive Committee should be situated at Lake Success and that the meetings of the Executive Committee should be held in Europe, initially at Geneva.

/The Executive

The Executive Secretary explained that the document circulated by him had been based on the assumption that the Interim Commission would meet only once at the end of the Conference at Havana to elect the Executive Committee, appoint the Executive Secretary and approve the budget. The Executive Committee would meet not more than twice each year for a period of two to three weeks. Any site other than Lake Success or Geneva which was selected was likely to prove more expensive and less conducive to efficiency.

After further discussion the representative of Canada moved that the Working Party take the following decision: "That after its first meeting in Havana the Executive Committee shall meet in Geneva unless it decides otherwise." This proposal was supported by the representatives of France, Iraq, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines and the United Kingdom. The representatives of Mexico, Peru and the United States were in favour of leaving the question to be decided by the Executive Committee itself. It was agreed that this result should be recorded in the Report of the Working Party but the question still remained open in the text of the Arrangement.

The Executive Secretary requested that the square brackets which had been placed around paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the draft Arrangement should now be removed. Some discussion followed upon the letter received by the Executive Secretary from the Secretary-General of the United Nations regarding the expenses of the Preparatory Committee, the Havana Conference and the Interim Commission (see document E/CONF.2/C.6/W.21):

The representative of New Zealand said that he considered that the Working Party should agree that the answer to the first question asked by the Secretary-General in the penultimate paragraph of that letter should be in the negative.

The Executive Secretary stated that there were two distinct questions involved - firstly, the question of funds for the Preparatory Committee and the Havana Conference, and secondly, the question of funds for the Interim Commission. On the first point it must be remembered that the monies in question had already been spent and the only problem which remained to be settled was how this expense was to be borne by the Members of the United Nations. There was accordingly no question of the governments signing the Arrangement assuming a commitment in respect of these monies and therefore paragraph 2 (h) of the Arrangement spoke only of consultations regarding these expenses. As regards the second point, paragraph 6 of the Arrangement had been very carefully drafted so as both to enable the Secretary-General of the United Nations to comply with the regulations by which he was bound, and so as not to impose upon governments signing the Arrangement any new commitment. It was contemplated that the way in which the problem might be solved,

/should advances

should advances be obtained from the United Nations for the Interim Commission and should the Organization not be ultimately established, would be to write off from the working capital fund the losses incurred, which procedure could be carried through by commitments which most Members of the United Nations already had.

If some such provision as that contained in the second sentence of paragraph 6 of the draft Arrangement were not adopted, there were two alternative courses which could be taken - firstly, to ask the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene the Advisory Committee on the Budget for the purpose of requesting funds, or secondly, to set up at Havana some body which would consider ways of obtaining from governments signing the Arrangement the necessary funds for the Interim Commission.

After further discussion it was agreed to postpone discussion on this question until the next meeting. In the course of such discussion it was clarified that apparently the Secretary-General of the United Nations had at the present time authority to advance monies up to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to the Interim Commission.

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