

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

RESTRICTED

L/2055

19 August 1963

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ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

Absence on Military Service

Note by the Executive Secretary

1. United Nations Staff Rules, currently applied to GATT staff, prescribe that:

"In accordance with section 18(a) of the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, staff members who are nationals of those Member States which have acceded to that Convention shall be 'immune from national service obligations' in the armed services of the country of their nationality."

2. Member States which have not acceded to the Convention are at liberty to call their nationals for military service, and in these cases the United Nations Staff Rules prescribe that such nationals, if called for military service whether for training or active duty, be placed on special leave without pay for the duration of their required military service. Alternatively, their absence may be charged to accrued annual leave.
3. Whilst the rules have caused no particular difficulty in cases of one-time service only, they have led to an inequitable situation in regard to the periodic refresher courses which Swiss nationals (and in certain exceptional cases French nationals) must undergo up to a certain age limit. In practice this has meant that such staff members each year either have to give up half of their total leave entitlement to military service or request three weeks leave without pay.
4. In order to compensate such staff members to some extent the ILO has adopted a rule whereby some extra leave with pay is granted to them. At present such extra leave on full pay is granted for two calendar weeks. As, in the case of Swiss nationals, the refresher course usually lasts for three weeks, a balance of one week remains, which is charged to the staff member's annual leave or considered as leave without pay.
5. The Executive Secretary is of the opinion that the ILO practice is the more equitable and proposes that as of 1 January 1963 GATT staff members called up for military refresher courses be placed on special leave with pay during a period corresponding to two thirds of their absence from duty, provided that such compensation does not exceed the equivalent of two calendar weeks per annum on special leave with pay.
6. The financial implications of the proposal are negligible.

Point for decision: Paragraph 5

P.T.O.