

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NINTH SESSIONNotes by the Chairman and the Executive Secretary on
the Agenda for the Meeting of the Intersessional Committee
commencing 26 July 1954

The Chairman and the Executive Secretary have discussed the Agenda for the meeting convened on 26 July (IC/W/25) which will be concerned principally with the arrangements for the Ninth Session, including the review of the Agreement. The following suggestions are put forward for consideration by the contracting parties in advance of the meeting so that their representatives will have instructions on points which require decision.

1. Opening Date

It will be proposed that the Ninth Session should open on Thursday, 28 October, and that the item "REVIEW OF THE AGREEMENT" should be discussed in plenary meetings commencing on Monday, 8 November.

2. Attendance of Ministers

In view of the importance of the Ninth Session it is expected that some contracting parties will wish their delegations to be led by Ministers. The most appropriate time for such ministerial leaders of delegations to be present would be during the plenary discussions on the review commencing 8 November.

3. Appointment of Working Parties

There are a number of items on the agenda (apart from the review) which will probably require working parties (see Annex to IC/W/25). It will be desirable to appoint these working parties during the first day or two of the Session so that they may complete, or at least make considerable progress in, their work before the discussions on the review begin. For the examination of problems arising in the review it is expected that several working parties, including a legal drafting committee, will be required; these will be appointed during the discussions on the review as needed.

It may be possible for some of the work to be done in advance of the Session; there is no reason, for example, why a Budget Working Party should not be appointed by the Committee in July, with membership similar to that of the working party appointed at the Eighth Session. This Working Party, manned by the local (Geneva) representatives of its members, could examine the budget estimates prior to the opening of the Session; its report could be circulated at the beginning of the Session but would not be finalized until later when any subsequent decisions of the CONTRACTING PARTIES could be taken into account.

Some other working parties could begin in the first days of the Session. For example, the Schedules Working Party should be able to meet on the second day provided contracting parties submit all the changes they wish to make in their schedules well in advance. The Committee might fix a closing date for the submission of requests, say 1 September. The secretariat could then prepare a draft of the Fourth Protocol of Rectifications and Modifications for circulation with the Provisional Agenda early in October. Thus this task could be disposed of rapidly at the beginning of the Session.

In order to make administrative and staff arrangements for the Session the Executive Secretary will require instructions from the Committee. In particular, he must know by the end of July how many meetings are to be held simultaneously. The present Budget appropriations (including the appropriation for unforeseen expenditure) will be sufficient to provide the usual facilities until 8 November and, thereafter, additional facilities to make it possible to hold either a plenary and one working party at the same time or three working parties meeting simultaneously. The Committee should decide whether to instruct the Executive Secretary to provide services on that scale.

4. Representation of Non-Contracting Parties

The representation of governments other than contracting parties is determined by rules 8 and 9 of the rules of procedure. Invitations to send observers are sent regularly to some twenty governments and this appears to provide adequately for representation during the review of the Agreement of the governments which have shown an interest in the work of the CONTRACTING PARTIES. In addition, however, the Executive Secretary might be given authority to invite, subject to formal confirmation by the CONTRACTING PARTIES, any other government which indicates a desire to be represented.

Several intergovernmental organizations are regularly invited to send observers to GATT Sessions, namely UN, IMF, FAO, ILO, OEEC and the Customs Co-operation Council. In addition, the Council of Europe and the European Coal and Steel Community have been invited to be represented when questions of special interest to them are under consideration. These arrangements appear to be adequate.

5. Next Meeting of the Intersessional Committee

The arrangements for the intersessional administration of the Agreement provide that the Committee will meet from four to six weeks before the opening of an ordinary session to consider what matters are likely to arise and to examine the adequacy of the documentation available. If the date of 28 October is approved for the opening of the Session, the next meeting would be convened for some time between 16 and 30 September. On this occasion, however, governments will be busy preparing for the review and might have difficulty arranging

for appropriate representation at a September meeting. If the items on the advance agenda and their documentation are examined at the July meeting, the Committee might wish to forgo the September meeting and not meet again until shortly before the opening of the Session as is also provided in the procedures.

However, any decision on this point has to be considered in relation to the preparation of an annotated agenda for the review. The Committee was instructed to prepare an annotated agenda taking into account proposals submitted by contracting parties. It was anticipated that the proposals would be received by 1 July, but it has not been possible for governments to keep to this timetable and it seems unlikely that they will be able to send them in earlier than September. If it appears that a large number of the proposals will have been received by mid-September the Committee might consider it useful to hold its September meeting in order to draw up an annotated agenda and to make suggestions to the CONTRACTING PARTIES as to how the proposals should be dealt with. If there is no September meeting the secretariat will prepare an agenda for the review and this can be examined by the Committee at the meeting held shortly before the Session opens.