

Trade Problems of Less-Developed Countries

The standing GATT committee (Committee III) concerned with the trade problems of less-developed countries submitted a report to the Contracting Parties at the twentieth session reviewing the progress made over the previous year in the reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers to the expansion of trade in less-developed countries. The report indicated that the less-developed countries were not satisfied with the progress so far made and were determined to ensure that their problems were brought to the attention of the industrialized countries at the 1963 GATT ministerial meeting.

In addition, during the session, the Contracting Parties considered a proposal to explore ways and means by which less-developed countries that were not parties to GATT but considered it the appropriate place to deal with trade problems might contribute to and participate in the work of GATT that was of particular interest to them. However, in view of the shortness of time and the importance of the matter involved, it was decided to refer this question to the GATT Council for examination. The Council will consider this matter when it turns its attention to preparations for the GATT ministerial meeting.

Membership

At the opening meeting of the twentieth session, two new members were welcomed into the General Agreement. Trinidad and Tobago and Uganda, for which the British Government had been responsible, acquired independence in 1962 and gained full autonomy in the conduct of their external commercial relations. Both had applied to participate in the Agreement as full members and became the forty-third and forty-fourth Contracting Parties.

In addition, Yugoslavia and the United Arab Republic had made formal requests to accede to the General Agreement. Since 1959, Yugoslavia has been in close relation with GATT, and the General Agreement has served as a basis for the trade relations between Yugoslavia and most Contracting Parties. The Contracting Parties adopted declarations granting provisional accession to both Yugoslavia and the U.A.R.; in the case of Yugoslavia, until December 31, 1965, and, for the U.A.R., until December 31, 1964, or earlier for both if the necessary tariff negotiations should be completed before those dates.

The Contracting Parties also extended the termination of the provisional accession of Argentina until December 31, 1964, to allow further time to complete tariff negotiations leading to full accession. The special arrangement permitting Spain to participate in the work of the Contracting Parties was also extended to July 31, 1963, by which time, it was expected, Spain would have acceded to the General Agreement.

The Contracting Parties also reviewed the decision taken in 1960, under which the continuance of GATT commitments made on behalf of African states by their former metropolitan countries was provided for after the territories became independent. The 1960 decision recognized that newly-independent territories would