

PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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The Department of External Affairs announced today details of the tariff agreements which were negotiated under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade at the recently concluded conference in Geneva. The Head of the Canadian Delegation, Mr. L.D. Wilgress, signed on behalf of Canada on May 23 the Protocol of Supplementary Concessions to the GATT in which are incorporated the complete schedules of all the tariff concessions negotiated at the conference. Details of the agreements were tabled in the House of Commons this morning.

The Tariff Conference, which opened in January, 1956, and was recently concluded at Geneva, constitutes the fourth general round of multilateral tariff negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, following similar GATT conferences held at Geneva in 1947, at Annecy in 1949 and at Torquay in 1951. Twenty-two countries participated in these latest negotiations, and the new agreements concluded among them are an extension of the agreements drawn up among GATT countries in the previous years. As in the past, the negotiations were carried on between pairs or groups of countries, on a selective product-by-product basis.

Canada negotiated new agreements with the United States and with twelve other countries in Europe and Latin America. Under the most-favoured-nation principle, which is basic to the GATT, all tariff concessions agreed to at Geneva will become available to Canada whether or not these concessions were negotiated directly with Canada. Similarly, Canada will automatically extend its own tariff concessions to each of the other participating countries, and to non-GATT countries with which Canada has most-favoured nation agreements.

The complete schedules of all tariff concessions negotiated at this Conference are being made public today. They are incorporated in a Protocol of Supplementary Concessions to the GATT signed by representatives of participating countries at Geneva. Mr. L.D. Wilgress, Canadian Ambassador to NATO, signed this Protocol on behalf of Canada on May 23rd.

The new tariff concessions will come into effect in the various countries on dates to be announced by each government. It is not expected that any country will bring its concessions into effect until June 30th at the earliest. U.S. concessions will be implemented in three stages over the next two years, as required by U.S. legislation. Under the terms of the GATT, all the concessions agreed upon are bound against increase, subject to certain procedures permitting countries to renegotiate particular concessions from time to time.