
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND
EMPLOYMENT.

**GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS
AND TRADE.**

STATEMENT BY THE HON. R. T. POLLARD IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, CANBERRA, 18TH NOVEMBER, 1947,
TOGETHER WITH ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS.

Presented by Command; ordered to be printed, 18th November, 1947.

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In accordance with the arrangements entered into at Geneva, the provisional application of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was made dependent upon the signature by the following eight key countries of the Protocol of Provisional Application, namely:--

The Commonwealth of Australia,
The Kingdom of Belgium (in respect of its metropolitan territory),
Canada,
The French Republic (in respect of its metropolitan territory),
The Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg,
The Kingdom of the Netherlands (in respect of its metropolitan territory),
The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (in respect of its metropolitan territory),
The United States of America.

All eight countries have now signed the Protocol. The texts of the Final Act, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and of the Protocol of Provisional Application were released by the United Nations Organization for publication at 18.30 hours Eastern Standard Time in the United States, 17th November, corresponding to 9.30 am this morning Australian Eastern Standard Time.

The Protocol was signed on behalf of the Australian Government by the Rt. Hon. Dr. H. V. Evatt, and the following statement was issued On behalf of the Government.

The Australian Government undertakes to apply provisionally, provided all other countries do likewise, the tariff reductions negotiated with the other countries whose representatives have been engaged in Geneva during the greater part of 1947 This action will be consequent upon my signing, on behalf of the Australian Government, the Protocol of Provisional application of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

The Australian Government will apply the new rates provisionally from 18th November. At a later date, the Government will decide whether to recommend to Parliament that the provisional agreement be confirmed.

The breadth of the negotiations conducted by a committee established by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations is without precedent. More than 120 separate negotiations ranging over a vast number of products were completed by representatives who met to attempt mutually advantageous arrangements to free the channels of world trade. Australia negotiated with a full conviction of the benefits to be gained, not only to herself, but by the whole world from a satisfactory settlement and a selective reduction of present trade barriers.

The negotiations have to be considered in the light of concurrent efforts to get agreements, in the form of a Charter for an International Trade Organization, to commitments upon countries to maintain employment and the demand for goods, which are the bases of trade, and to adhere to agreed rules of good trade conduct.

These commitments are intended to supplement those which the members of the United Nations have already accepted in the United Nations Charter--namely, to promote, jointly and severally, higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development.

The project embarked upon by the Economic and Social Council, through its preparatory committee and the world conference which is to assemble shortly in Havana is one of the

most constructive endeavours of the United Nations. The progress already made in tariff negotiations and the decision by a substantial number of the Governments to bring tariff reductions into provisional effect lay a sound basis for successful achievement of a significant improvement in world trading conditions and for a solution of the present economic crisis.

I table the text of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which includes general articles, tariff schedules, covering all the countries concerned, and the annexed Protocols. These documents, which have only arrived from Geneva in the last few days, are extremely bulky and until they can be reprinted in Australia, I regret that only a very limited number of copies will be available.

The changes involved in the Australian tariff are contained in the Resolutions and Explanatory Memorandum which are being tabled separately. Copies of these documents are available for distribution.

Statements have also been assembled which, in conjunction with the Tariff Resolutions and Explanatory Memorandum, contain the basic information bearing upon the effect of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade on Australian interests, if the Agreement is eventually adopted by the Governments concerned. These Statements are also available for distribution.