

WORLD AGREEMENT FOR ABOLISHING DUTIES ON SCIENCE EQUIPMENT, BOOKS AND FILMS

SCIENTIFIC instruments, apparatus and collections intended for education or research will enjoy duty-free entry under a new international agreement which UNESCO is sponsoring as a means of reducing barriers to world trade in educational, scientific and cultural materials. The text of the convention was approved by UNESCO's 59 Member States attending the recent General Conference of the Organization in Florence.

The "Agreement on the Importation of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials" will also permit the free import of books, newspapers, periodicals, maps and charts. To aid their circulation further, contracting Governments will grant licenses and foreign exchange for publications consigned to public libraries. A special article in the convention provides for the duty-free entry of all books and other educational material for the blind.

Duties will also be lifted from educational, scientific or cultural films, filmstrips, newsreels and sound recordings. Paintings, drawings and sculpture will likewise be freed from tariff restrictions.

Scientific instruments and apparatus will enjoy exemption provided, firstly, they are intended solely for educational or research purposes and are destined for recognized educational or scientific institutions; secondly, that materials of equal scientific value are not already being manufactured in the importing country. Other materials which will be admitted duty-free, if consigned to approved institutions, include patterns, models and wall charts; and architectural, industrial or engineering plans and designs.

UNESCO is circulating the convention to all its Member States, and to Members of the United Nations. It will be open for signature at Lake Success, New York, shortly and will come into force following ratification by ten countries.

The United Kingdom Government has announced that it will submit the text to Parliament for ratification. Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland are among other countries which are expected to take quick action for legislative approval.

Following its adoption at Florence, the Director-General of UNESCO, Dr. Jaime Torres Bodet, said the new world pact represented a substantial contribution, in the technical field, to mutual understanding and peace. He urged swift action to bring it into force.

This is the second international agreement to be sponsored by UNESCO. The first, which is designed to abolish duties, quotas and licenses hindering the movement of films, recordings and other audio-visual aids to education, has now been signed by 18 countries and ratified by three (Norway, Yugoslavia and Pakistan).

Both conventions are expected to be of considerable aid to importers and exporters in countries taking part in UNESCO's International Coupon Scheme, since they will lift tariff and other restrictions on materials which the scheme covers—books, periodicals, scientific materials and educational or scientific films. This plan, which was initiated as a book scheme in December 1948, has been extended to scientific materials and films since January 1950. It enables institutions or individuals in soft currency countries to buy these items from hard currency countries, while making payment in their own national currency.

Nineteen countries are now taking part in the book phase, ten in the scientific materials phase and twelve in the film phase of the scheme. Scientific material purchased is for the time being limited for the use of educational and scientific institutions. A leaflet issued by UNESCO gives a list of materials in 11 categories that can be bought, together with the addresses of suppliers. These materials include chemicals, glass and porcelain.

—By courtesy of UNESCO.

GROUND TRAFFIC CONTROL FROM THE AIR

THE utility of the "mobilophone" service was demonstrated on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Dutch Broadcasting Association at Hilversum. A fixed mobilophone set was stationed at Police Headquarters, while 6 mobilophone-equipped cars drove through Hilver-

sum to report possible traffic jams. In addition, a sports-plane equipped with Philips mobilophone cruised above Hilversum, to give instructions, also from the air. In this way the entire traffic control could take place from one central point (Police Headquarters).
