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*Der Stellvertreter des Chefs der Abteilung für Politische Angelegenheiten
des Politischen Departements, R. Probst,
an die schweizerische Botschaft in London¹*

Bern, 25. Juni 1966, 19.15 Uhr

Rhodesien. Im Hinblick auf parlamentarische Anfrage² betreffend schweizerische Importe aus Rhodesien, die Foreign Secretary³ bekanntlich 27. Juni zu beantworten gedenkt, überreichten wir, um irriger und übertriebener Darstellung rechtzeitig vorzubeugen, gestern Geschäftsträger Keeble und Botschaftsrat Purves folgende von Handelsabteilung zusammen mit uns vorbereitete Definition des «courant normal»⁴.

quote

1. The “courant normal” is based on the quantities imported in previous years, i. e. on imports made during a period of reference.

2. Each importer is entitled, on the basis of documentary proof, to bring the same quantities of goods across the customs border as in the period of reference.

3. Experience has shown that imports of raw materials and agricultural products effected by individual importers vary considerably from year to year. It would, therefore, be arbitrary to take only one calendar year as reference period. In the present case importers may choose between the years 1964 and 1965.

4. In order to comply with their selling possibilities and with the necessity to keep certain stocks, importers are free to spread their imports – in accordance with such needs – over the whole calendar year. Once their quotas are used they are not entitled to obtain further import licences for the rest of the year.

5. On the grounds of general regulations in force since a long time, importers have to present their licence as *and when their goods cross the Swiss customs border*. It is, in this context, irrelevant whether the goods are immediately cleared through customs or put in a private bonded warehouse in Switzerland to be cleared through customs later on. Otherwise, an importer could buy any big quantities abroad and put these goods in his private bonded warehouse without having an import licence.

6. Dispatching the goods to a private bonded warehouse within the Swiss territory gives the importer the possibility to clear them through customs at a later stage, i. e. when they go into manufacture. This method is in particu-

1. Telegramm Nr. 141 (Empfangskopie): 2200.40(-) 1986/25 Bd. 28 (370.1). Erhalten: 25. Juni 1966 10.30 Uhr. Kopie an H. Bühler.

2. Zur parlamentarischen Anfrage von W. Hamilton vom 27. Juni 1966 vgl. E 2001(E) 1978/84 Bd. 936 (C.23.2).

3. M. Stewart.

4. Vgl. dazu die Notiz von R. Probst an P. Micheli, H. Bühler und die schweizerische Botschaft in London vom 25. Juni 1966, dodis.ch/31505.



lar made use of if the goods are subject to high customs duties or high fiscal charges. Tobacco is a most typical example and importers have applied this method for many years.

7. The figures of the customs returns have to be comparable with the figures of trade statistics. For this reason *trade statistics* are based on the quantities of goods *cleared through customs*. Therefore, the figures for goods brought to a private bonded warehouse will not be reflected in the trade statistics when those goods cross the border but only at the moment when they are cleared through customs.

8. As a logical consequence of the foregoing the figures for goods which have been cleared through customs do not necessarily conform to the figures for goods having crossed the customs border and the figures in the trade statistics are not necessarily correspondent to the figures for goods which have crossed the customs border. With regard to tobacco this difference is considerable.

9. In conclusion, it may be stressed that the circumstances outlined above have no influence whatever on the fact that import quotas for all goods including tobacco are calculated in strict accordance with the quantities of goods brought over the Swiss customs border in reference period.

10. It may finally be added that the «courant normal» is a notion of long standing in Swiss trade policy.

unquote

Von Überreichung entsprechender statistischer Unterlagen⁵ haben wir, obwohl wir auch danach befragt wurden, bewusst abgesehen. Überlassen Euch zu entscheiden, ob ihr es für nötig haltet, gleiche Information auch Euerseits an Euere Gesprächspartner weiterzuleiten oder ob dies – was wir eigentlich aus taktischen Überlegungen vorziehen würden – unterbleiben kann. Näherer Bericht⁶ folgt mit Montagkurier.

5. Für statistische Angaben zum Import aus Rhodesien vgl. das BR-Prot. Nr. 2189 vom 17. Oktober 1965, dodis.ch/31953, S. 5. Zur Tabakeinfuhr vgl. die Notiz von R. Probst vom 31. August 1966, dodis.ch/31107, und zur Asbesteinfuhr vgl. die Notiz von R. Probst an P. Micheli vom 4. Februar 1966, dodis.ch/31096.

6. Vgl. Anm. 4.