Before I speak of the work which faces us during this, the Tenth Session of the Contracting Parties, I have a painful duty to perform. I refer to the heavy loss which we have sustained since we last met together. Our friend and colleague Mr. Max Suetens passed away on 5 August last. He was a man who had devoted the best years of his life to the cause for which we are working. He was one of the founding fathers of the General Agreement and one of its most stalwart supporters. We shall miss him very much in our work. Those of us who had come to know him well have, however, suffered a greater loss than that of an esteemed and respected colleague. We have lost a friend whose gay and vivacious personality cheered and warmed those who were fortunate enough to enjoy his friendship. They will all feel as I do a poignant sense of personal loss. I hope that during the course of this Session we may be able to devise some permanent tribute to Max Suetens. Meanwhile, I feel that all representatives of the contracting parties who are present in this room will wish to join with me in a brief silence in honour of our late friend and colleague.

When we left Geneva in the Spring of this year we had completed—and completed successfully—the arduous task of reviewing the General Agreement. We had agreed on numerous revisions which improved our Agreement and strengthened its basis. We had also agreed upon the terms on which to establish the Organization for Trade Cooperation, to provide for the permanent and effective administration of the Agreement. It had been our hope that when we met again this Session, the Agreement establishing the Organization would have been widely accepted and that we could look forward to its entry into force in the near future. However—and for reasons which can readily be understood—this has proved a somewhat over-optimistic estimate, and it is clear that some further time must elapse before we can foresee with certainty that the Organization for Trade Cooperation will be set up. I think it is important that we should agree at this Session to press forward as quickly as possible with the ratification of the Organization Agreement. It is true that machinery for administering the Agreement already exists and has been working for some years and therefore during this delay in general acceptance of the OTC Agreement, we have the means of carrying on with our work. On the other hand, in drawing up and submitting to the governments the Organizational Agreement—and let us remember that its main purpose is to provide an effective and permanent administration for the
General Agreement - we have in effect submitted the GATT, and the results of our work together in administering it, to a public vote of confidence. If that vote were withheld, the result could not fail to be damaging to the authority and effectiveness of the GATT.

In the meantime, we have the Agreement which has served us so well these past eight years. That Agreement has been modified as a result of the generally acceptable amendments agreed upon at the Ninth Session. Some of these modifications are being applied provisionally by the Contracting Parties with result that the support for the General Agreement has been broadened. It is now regarded by the majority of trading nations as a satisfactory instrument for achieving the objectives of raising living standards through promoting the freest possible exchange of goods between nations. I am confident that, whatever happens, the General Agreement and the machinery we have devised for its administration will continue for a long time to come to be the focal point for the resolution of questions designed to bring about the orderly conduct of world trade.

Turning now to the work of this Session, I would like first to attempt a general review of the background against which our work will be set. Although the general level of economic activity in the world continues high, there are nevertheless in various countries difficulties which have on the face of things appeared to slow down the march towards convertibility and a freer system of trade and payments. This check in momentum is, I suggest, more apparent than real because during the last year there has in fact on the whole been encouraging progress in the removal of restrictions, and particularly of discrimination. Admittedly this has not been the experience in all countries, and we have indeed reports on our Agenda relating to some intensification of restrictions. The broad picture, however, is not discouraging. Moreover, where in particular countries' difficulties are being experienced, they are being tackled in a way from which I think we can draw encouragement. The remedies which are being applied are not the sterile and restrictive remedies which have been in the past the first choice. They are remedies which attempt by internal measures to correct disequilibrium, thus enabling countries to maintain a high level of international trade, while putting their economic house in order.

In the course of the review of the General Agreement we spent much time in discussing the problems of under-developed countries, and these must always be of very prime concern to the Contracting Parties and to the General Agreement. Steady progress is being made in many of the under-developed countries in their programmes of economic development, although many also continue to be plagued with balance-of-payments problems and with inflation which if allowed to develop unchecked could well dissipate the hard-won improvements in standards of living which economic development is designed to achieve.

This has been the most active year in the history of the Contracting Parties. No sooner had the heavy task of the revision of the General Agreement been
completed than it was necessary to initiate tariff negotiations for the accession of Japan. These negotiations were brought to a successful conclusion and by a unanimous vote Japan was admitted as a full contracting party. I take this occasion to extend a hearty welcome to Japan who thus takes her full and appropriate place in this great trading community.

As is generally known, fourteen contracting parties found it necessary in connexion with the accession of Japan to have recourse to the provisions of Article XXXV. The Government of Japan has asked the Contracting Parties to examine this situation and has put forward a number of considerations which are clearly of great importance, and will have to be examined most carefully by the Contracting Parties. Indeed, this will be one of the most important items on our Agenda.

At the same time as negotiations were proceeding with Japan, a number of negotiations were also initiated with a view to making certain adjustments in the schedules to the Agreement preparatory to the extension of the firm validity of schedules until 1958. In the revision of the Agreement more flexibility has been accorded for the renegotiation of tariff concessions. It is gratifying that this flexibility has not resulted in a widespread unravelling of the existing Schedules and that all the Contracting Parties have shown themselves aware of the importance of maintaining tariff stability.

This in turn was followed by an important event of significance. The United States Congress renewed the Reciprocal Trade legislation, giving the President new powers to reduce, through negotiation, the United States tariff. Speedy action to take full advantage of this was necessary. Accordingly, a Working Party has met twice since the last Session to propose plans for these negotiations. Their report on this subject is before us at this Session.

Another Working Party has been examining the possibilities of drawing up an International Agreement relating to Commodities. Its work has been long, difficult, and controversial and the report will have to be carefully examined at this Session of the Contracting Parties.

The vitality of the General Agreement is again attested by the healthy crop of matters submitted to the Contracting Parties for investigation under the so-called complaints procedures in Article XXII. In this connexion we should note with satisfaction yet another successful outcome of a dispute thus submitted to the Contracting Parties at the Ninth Session. This was an important and difficult question, and its satisfactory settlement is further striking proof of the value of these procedures.

There are a number of other important points on the Agenda to which I will not refer specifically, but it is clear that we have as usual a heavily charged and difficult Agenda which we can only hope to complete in a relatively short space of time, if we arefavoured with the cooperation and good will of all delegations. This is a point to which I shall have to return when we consider the arrangements for the Session. I now declare formally open the Tenth Session of the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.