President Eisenhower, in his "State of the Union" message to the Congress of the United States on 5 January, re-emphasized the fact that strong economic ties are an essential element in the partnership of the United States with the other nations of the free world. He pointed out that increasing trade and investment help all of us to prosper together, and he mentioned the progress in this direction, most recently through the three-year extension of our trade agreements legislation. Then the President stressed the importance of the activities under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and requested Congressional approval of United States membership in the Organization for Trade Cooperation as the means for effectively administering the General Agreement.

I should like to add my personal satisfaction over having this opportunity to take part in one of the activities of the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement. As a businessman, I have been concerned for many years with international trade and the practical problems in international relations that affect the movement of commerce. The development of a method and tradition for settling international economic problems through consultation and co-operation is, I consider, one of the significant developments in international economic relations in the postwar years.

Today thirty-five countries meet in international forum as a matter of course to settle their trade problems. These countries include the leading trading nations of the world. They carry on more than 80 per cent of the trade of the entire world.

The meetings held by these nations have consistently emphasized action. Every annual session has resulted in concrete steps to settle commercial problems between nations or to remove trade barriers. These actions prove the true interest of these nations in freeing international trade from artificial restrictions.

We are all well aware that the nations of the free world cannot afford to relax the effort to strengthen their economic collaboration. In this effort the method of solving differences and removing barriers to world trade that has been worked out under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade can make an important contribution. But in our concentration on the statistical aspects of these negotiations, we must never forget that actions to remove barriers to trade are not merely steps towards stronger and more prosperous economies. They are steps towards world peace.
One of the most important uses that has been made of the method of multilateral negotiations has been in conferences to reduce tariffs. The several negotiating conferences that have been held since 1947, including the recent negotiations held at Geneva leading to the accession of Japan to the General Agreement, have demonstrated the effectiveness of multilateral action in this field. The cumulative result of these conferences has been concessions by the various countries applicable to about 60,000 individual tariff rates. All participating nations have made worthwhile concessions. Approximately two-thirds of the import trade of the Contracting Parties and one-half of the trade of the world is now affected by these agreements.

The United States has participated actively in each conference. Through the negotiations conducted during these conferences, United States duties have been reduced significantly. Since 1934 the rates on over three-fourths of the dutiable imports of the United States have been reduced by 50 per cent or more, and on almost one-fifth of these imports the reductions have been 75 per cent or more.

The United States believes firmly that this conference can result in an important extension of the work already accomplished. Our delegation is eager to do all in its power to make the conference a success. We are prepared to begin negotiations immediately. It is vital that the conference proceed as rapidly as possible and that we meet the deadline of the first week of May set by the Contracting Parties. With the traditional spirit of goodwill and co-operation which has existed under the General Agreement, I am sure that this conference will be brought to a successful conclusion.

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