The following remarks were made by Mr. F. Garcia-Oldini, Chile, after he had assumed the Chairmanship of the Contracting Parties on 22 November 1958.

I would like to associate myself to the tribute which has been paid to Mr. Jha’s personality, whose qualities of intelligence and warm-heartedness, I sincerely appreciate. Mr. Jha, who is quick-witted, and a man of considerable acumen, tact and understanding, has as chairman shown a degree of perfection which his successor should emulate. But what I have appreciated most is, as I have said before, his warm-heartedness. It can well be said as far as he is concerned that there was no need for him to grow silver hair in order to have a golden heart. I am convinced that he will always be one of us, that his Government will realize that we need him and that he should come back to all our meetings, to bring us the contribution of his talent and his tact.

I wish to thank the Contracting Parties for electing me Chairman of this Assembly. It is indeed a weighty honour. I wish to thank all those who have spoken such kind words in my favour. I know full well that the intention was to honour my country and Latin America and that when you elected me the less developed countries were in your minds. I wish to request all GATT members to co-operate with me and to help me. Talent alone is not enough to chair the meetings of an organization like GATT and it is not enough for the Chairman to devote to it his work and time. Co-operation from everyone is essential. As I said a few days ago, if the contracting parties are willing to help me, I can be a good Chairman. I have acted as Chairman in a number of organizations like the GATT and in such bodies the qualities of chairmanship depend very much on those whom the Chairman serves. The GATT has now reached a decisive stage. It is beginning to appreciate and use the hidden resources which the text of the General Agreement provides. It has had to change its machinery. The problems which it has to deal with are infinite in number and variety. I should like to try and give you a brief summary of the basic problems as they appear to me at this time, though time is short and I have to be quick because I have the feeling that some of you have to leave shortly.

The European Common Market has just come to life. One might say that though it is not yet operating, it has already given rise to hopes and fears, both of which are justified. It will be the responsibility of GATT, which has already attempted to do so, to ensure that the former shall materialize and that the latter shall be dispelled.
The Free Trade Area now emerges and now disappears from the horizon of the Contracting Parties. However, notwithstanding appearances, notwithstanding the prophets of doom we nourish the hope that obstacles will be overcome and that the Free Trade Area will come to life. There will again be occasions for the Contracting Parties to demonstrate their efficiency as a forum where problems are met and conciliation achieved.

Already the Nordic Common Market and Latin American integration are being silhouetted against the horizon. As far as the future is concerned the Scandinavian Common Market and Latin American integration are gradually taking shape. Both of them bring in their wake a number of problems and a number of hopes. As they arise out of a different context they will each bring in its trail different problems and will no doubt require the understanding, realism and imagination of the Contracting Parties.

For the time being, however, the most outstanding feature and the fact which looms largest in our minds and work, is the Haberler Report.

This Report, which is the fruitful result of a considerable amount of work is a permanent landmark introducing a new era in the life of GATT.

The subject of the Report was trade expansion. However, the question that concerns it, on which it is focussed, around which it centres, is the situation of the less developed countries. The reason is that the problems of the under-developed countries are the greatest and most determining challenge which destiny and history have ever put to our times and civilization. Our future depends on how we can meet this challenge.

The Contracting Parties will bring their contribution. Their efforts are already reflected in the Haberler Report and will further be manifested in the activities of the Committees which have been set up to follow up in a practical way the Experts' recommendations. One can reasonably hope that such activities will yield positive results, for the task of the Committees will perhaps be a decisive one. It will contribute to the realization of the hopes of many people of goodwill in many parts of the world.

The result of the work of our three Committees will come up for examination when we are in Japan. That is perhaps a good augury. It may be that, in the country where Hokusai produced the masterpieces which were the fruit of his genius, in the country where a strict philosophy prepares man for harmonious living and relationships with surrounding nature and with his neighbour, we shall have the good fortune to see our faith in the destiny of mankind given a new impetus; and it may be that, in the words of a Chilean poet, our hope that a new sun will dawn upon a transmuted humanity will be suffused with new life and new vigour.