Australia has participated in all previous rounds of tariff negotiations in the GATT. Our participation in the present round is another earnest of our willingness to contribute to the objectives of the General Agreement.

Australia has taken a number of steps since the last round of tariff negotiations that are of particular importance to our participation in this round.

Consistently with announced Government policy and our obligations under the General Agreement, we have completely removed import licensing controls on the greater part of our import trade, and substantially liberalized the controls that apply on the remainder.

I believe it will be well known that we have revised or concluded a number of trade agreements, notably one with the United Kingdom, which includes a revision of the provisions on the preference margins in the Australian tariff. Over a wide field we have already reduced the m.f.n. duties in the Australian tariff to the level permissible under the new agreement.

It will also be known that we have put through our tariff-making procedures a large number of items to determine what I might call the "peril point" below which duties could not be reduced without endangering efficient Australian industry.

We believe therefore that we have a fairly comprehensive brief to cover most things we want to do at this conference. On past experience, however, we must say that our ability to grant concessions may well be restricted by the value, and more particularly the nature, of the concessions we can get in return.

One of our initial tasks of course arises not because of any action on the Australian tariff but because of action proposed on concessions we have negotiated in the past with member countries of the European Economic Community. What I said about tariff negotiations in general applies again here. We cannot be expected to accept without question a situation under which we do not secure the full benefits of the concessions obtained in past negotiations.
One of the main reasons Australia had for advocating the need for a review of the provisions of GATT prior to the previous series of tariff negotiations in 1956 was that we believed that the kind of goal that seemed attainable in the early days of GATT was not being attained. We feared that earlier negotiations had secured practical and tangible results for manufactured products, but not for agricultural products.

It was the widespread disquiet felt by a number of contracting parties about this lack of balance in the GATT that resulted in moves for a general expansion of world trade in which all had an opportunity to share. The attainment of this objective will require long and consistent effort as some of the problems are deep seated. But it is of some satisfaction to Australia that the contracting parties recognized that some forms of non-tariff protection are negotiable in the same way as tariffs and we believe this Tariff Conference should provide an opportunity to remove or mitigate some of these barriers to trade.

On this occasion my delegation will also be taking advantage of the improved procedures included in the General Agreement during the 1955 review to meet the difficulties of countries such as Australia. That is, we will be re-negotiating some of the commitments previously assumed. In these renegotiations we will, of course, be working to the end of maintaining the general level of concessions under the Agreement, and, in many cases, offering concessions that are a more real reflection of today's trading conditions than the concessions we wish to replace.