Sir,

It has been my custom after each session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to bring to your attention the principal subjects which involve action by governments in preparation for the following session. On this occasion, I have been requested by the CONTRACTING PARTIES to include in my annual communication an outline of the programme of meetings for the ensuing year and also to bring to your notice the Resolutions adopted during the Eleventh Session on the entry into force of the Protocols of Amendment and of the Agreement on the Organization for Trade Cooperation.

1. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

A special Session

In a statement, on 8 December 1956, to the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community, the Foreign Minister of Belgium indicated that the six governments expect to sign, on 15 January, a treaty establishing a customs union and to ratify this treaty by 15 May. At the Eleventh Session the representative of Belgium, on behalf of the six governments, assured the CONTRACTING PARTIES that they would submit, for consideration by the CONTRACTING PARTIES under Article XXIV, any such treaty after its signature and before its ratification (SR.II/16). If the expectation that the Treaty will be signed in January is fulfilled, it would appear necessary to envisage a special session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES early in March.

Interseessional Committee

A number of important questions have been referred to the Committee for examination prior to the Twelfth Session. In order to deal with these questions I propose to convene meetings of the Committee in March, June and September. If the special session referred to in the preceding paragraph is convened, I suggest the Committee should meet at the same time. The principal subject for discussion at the March meeting would be
the arrangements to be made and the preparatory work to be done for dealing with the various items on the Committee's agenda and to establish a programme of work for the Committee. These items include:

(a) **European Free-Trade Area**

A report will be submitted on developments since the Eleventh Session in the examination by the OEEC of the practicability of establishing a free-trade area between the six members which are proposing to form a customs union and the other OEEC members. (SR.11/16).

(b) **Restrictive Business Practices**

The Governments of Norway and Germany submitted proposals at the Eleventh Session and I understand that the Norwegian Government intends to submit a further paper on this subject (SR.11/11).

(c) **Anti-Dumping and Countervailing Duties**

I shall submit an interim report on the arrangements to be made for the analysis of anti-dumping and countervailing legislation which the secretariat was instructed to carry out with the assistance of experts from the governments concerned (SR.11/3).

(d) **France/Tunisia Customs Union**

It may be too early at the March meeting to discuss this question in a substantive way, but the Committee might consider what action is necessary and make arrangements to complete its task at the meeting in June (SR.11/12).

(e) **Tariff Negotiations**

The Committee might give preliminary consideration to the various possibilities for tariff negotiations in 1957 e.g. in connexion with the new Brazilian Tariff, the accession of Switzerland and the eventual prolongation beyond 31 December 1957 of the assured life of the Schedules.

(f) **Greek Increase of Bound Duty**

The Committee might consider the arrangements to be made for the further examination of the complaint submitted to the Eleventh Session by
the Government of Germany concerning the action by the Government of Greece in increasing the bound duty on gramophone records (SR.11/16).

(g) Affiliation of the GATT Staff to the UN Pension Fund

I shall submit a report on developments since the Eleventh Session.

I propose that the June meeting of the Committee should be held at the same time as the meetings of the Consultations Committee which was appointed at the Eleventh Session to conduct consultations with governments under Article XII:4(b). I have suggested tentatively to the governments concerned that the nine consultations to be held in the summer should be held during the three weeks 10 to 29 June. I am communicating separately with the governments concerned regarding the preparatory work which must be put in hand in this connexion.

In accordance with the amendment of the intersessional procedures agreed upon at the Eleventh Session, the Committee is required to meet three weeks before the opening of each regular session. As the Twelfth Session is to open on 17 October the September meeting of the Committee should be held during the week commencing 23 September. The task of the Committee at that meeting will be to examine the items on the provisional agenda with a view to clarifying and defining the issues involved and to consider whether the accompanying documentation is adequate.

2. PROTOCOLS OF AMENDMENT AND THE AGREEMENT ON THE ORGANIZATION FOR TRADE COOPERATION

At the Eleventh Session the CONTRACTING PARTIES adopted two Resolutions which are contained in document L/603 of which a copy is attached. These Resolutions urge those contracting parties which have not yet signed the Protocols of Amendment or the Agreement on the establishment of the Organization for Trade Cooperation to make every effort to do so in the near future. In order that the results of the review of the operation of the Agreement, carried out by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their Ninth Session, should not be placed in jeopardy, the CONTRACTING PARTIES hope that these Protocols and the Agreement on the Organization for Trade Cooperation will enter into force before the Twelfth Session.

A statement of all Protocols which have not yet been accepted by all contracting parties, with a list of the governments which have not signed them or which have only signed them ad referendum, is also attached hereto.
3. **ACTION BY GOVERNMENTS**

The following list of other items on the agenda for the Twelfth Session, which involve action by contracting parties, may assist your departments in initiating preparatory work. A further communication on each of these questions will be issued later.

(a) **Discriminatory Import Restrictions**

Pursuant to Article XIV:1(g) the CONTRACTING PARTIES are required to report annually on the discriminatory aspects of quantitative import restrictions maintained by governments under the provisions of Article XII. Contracting parties should submit their answers to the questionnaire (Fourth Supplement, page 65) not later than 17 July.

(b) **Marks of Origin**

The proposals of the Working Party on Trade and Customs Regulations at the Eleventh Session are to be studied with a view to final decisions being taken at the Twelfth Session (L/595).

(c) **Consular Formalities**

The CONTRACTING PARTIES reaffirmed their Decision of 7 November 1952 calling for the abolition of consular invoices and consular visas and for annual reports by governments on steps taken to this end (L/595).

(d) **Orthopaedic Equipment**

The CONTRACTING PARTIES have requested a statement on the duties, restrictions and formalities affecting the importation of orthopaedic equipment (SR.11/11).

(e) **Schedules**

Requests for rectifications and modifications of Schedules should be submitted by 15 August so that a draft protocol may be prepared and distributed by mid-September. Contracting parties which have not submitted the new consolidation of their Schedules should endeavour to do so by the end of 1957 (L/600).

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

E. Wyndham White,
Executive Secretary.
LIST OF PROTOCOLS AND CONTRACTING PARTIES WHICH HAVE NOT SIGNED THEM OR ARE REQUIRED TO CONFIRM DEFINITIVELY THEIR SIGNATURES

**Protocol Amending Part I and Articles XXIX and XXX**

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**Protocol Amending the Preamble and Parts II and III**

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**Protocol of Organizational Amendments**

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Agreement on the Organization for Trade Cooperation

Australia
Austria (subject to ratification)
Belgium (subject to ratification)
Brazil
Canada
Ceylon
Chile (ad referendum)
Cuba
Czechoslovakia
Denmark

Dominican Republic
Finland
France
Fed. Rep. of Germany (ad referendum)
Indonesia
Italy
Japan
Luxemburg (subject to ratification)
Kingdom of the Netherlands (subject to ratification)
New Zealand
Norway
Peru
Fed. of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (ad referendum)
Sweden
Turkey (ad referendum)
Union of South Africa
United States (subject to approval)
Uruguay

Protocol of Rectification to the French Text

Austria (subject to ratification)
Belgium (subject to ratification)
Brazil

Chile (ad referendum)

Luxemburg (subject to ratification)
Peru
Turkey
Uruguay

Second Protocol of Rectifications and Modifications

Chile

Third Protocol of Rectifications and Modifications

Chile

Fourth Protocol of Rectifications and Modifications

Austria
Chile (ad referendum)
Nicaragua (ad referendum)
Turkey (ad referendum)

Fifth Protocol of Rectifications and Modifications

Australia
Brazil
Canada
Chile
Cuba
Dominican Republic
Fed. Rep. of Germany
Uruguay