Dear Sir,

In the preparation of the report of the Panel of Experts appointed by the CONTRACTING PARTIES at their Twelfth Session to study trends in international trade, we will need data concerning revenue duties and other fiscal charges which may affect the volume of imports of certain products. The GATT secretariat, of course, has prepared for the Experts the relevant data it possesses concerning duties in the main importing countries. However, this information does not appear to us to be fully comparable because these data do not necessarily include internal taxes which may have the same effect as revenue duties. We should, therefore, be grateful if you would give us the data of fiscal charges levied in your country either in the way of customs duties or internal taxes for coffee, tea, cocoa and tobacco.

We append a questionnaire which should be filled in with the information related to these products and sent back to us possibly before the Experts meet to draft their report, i.e. on 7/8 July.

In order to clearly bring out the problem involved, the information supplied in reply to the questionnaire should show the situation existing on 1 January 1958 so far as customs duties and other charges are concerned, and should indicate the statistical trade figures for 1957.

The questionnaire needs, however, some clarification concerning question 3(b) which relates to tobacco. It is particularly difficult to assess the effect of fiscal charges on this commodity, mainly because of the following reasons:

(a) The charges levied on leaf tobacco are not necessarily levied on the leaf itself, but often on the tobacco contained in the manufactured products.

(b) Many countries have a very long-established tobacco monopoly.
In order to make it possible to assess the fiscal charges imposed in so many different ways on tobacco and tobacco products, it would be useful to obtain, as provided in question 3(b), an estimate of the combined fiscal charges as a percentage of the value of leaf tobacco.

As indicated earlier, we would like to have these figures for the Panel of Experts available on 8 July but, of course, if the information requested in part B of the questionnaire cannot be compiled by that date, we should be grateful if you would forward the replies available at this time, without waiting for the remaining data.

Yours faithfully,

J. Royer,
Deputy Executive Secretary.