Ministerial Representatives at the Thirteenth Session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES of GATT reviewed trends in international trade and in particular took into account a report prepared by four eminent economists at the request of the CONTRACTING PARTIES following a similar Ministerial discussion at the Twelfth Session. Ministers gave careful consideration to the problems arising from widespread agricultural protectionism and agreed that a solution to these problems was fundamental to the expansion of international trade. Accordingly they agreed upon the need for a detailed study of these questions within the framework of the General Agreement, including a confrontation of agricultural policies in which all contracting parties would join.

On the basis of this agreement the delegations to the present Session will now elaborate the appropriate procedures and arrangements for giving effect to this agreement.

The Ministers also took note of the adverse effects on the economies of primary producing countries and on international trade in general of sharp short-term fluctuations in the prices of raw materials and agreed that these problems should also be carefully studied on a product-by-product basis, jointly by producers and consumers concerned, with a view to avoiding such fluctuations both through national and international action. The GATT should be ready to sponsor such studies as and when required.

The Ministers were also impressed by the evidence of the failure of the export trade of the less-developed countries to expand as rapidly as their growing import needs imperatively requires. They agreed that such expansion is an essential condition of economic development and that in addition to the efforts of the under-developed countries themselves the more developed countries could make an important contribution not only by maintaining conditions favourable to the export trade of less-developed countries but also by avoiding protective or fiscal measures or policies which would have harmful effects on such trade, both in respect of raw materials and finished goods.
The Ministers also agreed that immediate consideration should be given to arrangements for a further round of tariff negotiations under the auspices of the General Agreement in the relatively near future.

Finally, the Ministers felt that, in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the General Agreement, the CONTRACTING PARTIES might meet oftener and that permanent representation should be strengthened.

In addition to Ministers from a number of contracting parties, two members of the Commission of the EEC took part in the Ministerial discussions.