1. The fourteenth session of the CONTRACTING PARTIES to GATT will open at Geneva on 11 May and will continue for three weeks. At this session Member Countries will be represented at the high official level and not by ministers of trade.

2. A major task of the session will be to review the work of the three committees which were set up at the last session to set in motion the GATT programme for the expansion of international trade. Committee I has been examining the possibility of arranging a further general round of multilateral tariff negotiations within the framework of the GATT. Committee II has begun its task of tackling the special problems of trade in agricultural products and, in particular, of assembling data regarding the use by Member Governments of measures (other than tariffs) which they use for the protection of agriculture. Committee III has made a start towards examining the special difficulties which face the less-developed countries in expanding their trade.

3. Once again the CONTRACTING PARTIES will be faced by the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany continues to maintain import restrictions on a variety of important agricultural products and on some industrial items, although the Federal Republic has no longer any need to protect its foreign exchange reserves. Discussions on this problem began in 1957, and early in 1959 there was a consultation between some twelve contracting parties and the Federal Republic on the items which still are subject to import controls.

4. Since the thirteenth session consultations have been held with the European Economic Community on the problems of trade in certain commodities - coffee, cocoa, tea, tobacco and bananas - which may arise out of the development of the Community, in particular the association of the overseas Territories with the Community. Reports on these consultations will be shortly completed.

5. The session will mark the opening of the 1959 series of consultations, on a country by country basis, on import restrictions maintained by certain contracting parties to conserve their foreign exchange reserves. During the fourteenth session consultations will be held with France, New Zealand, Union of South Africa, and the United Kingdom. Further consultations in this series will be held later in the year with Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Australia, Rhodesia and Nyasaland, Norway, and 'kleya. These consultations will be of a general nature, to cover all aspects of the import restrictions maintained by these contracting parties to conserve foreign exchange.

6. The CONTRACTING PARTIES will have to consider reports of working groups which have met since the last session to deal with (a) the range and extent of subsidies maintained by Member Governments (b) the need to provide detailed information about state-trading enterprises maintained by Member Governments (c) certain technical aspects of anti-dumping duties maintained by Member Governments.
7. On the subject of accession to GATT, the CONTRACTING PARTIES will have a report from a working group which has examined the request of Yugoslavia for associated membership. In addition, formal requests for accession have been received from Israel and Poland.

8. Once again, the agenda includes the application of Article XXV to Japan by a number of contracting parties, which thereby refrain from undertaking GATT obligations towards Japan.

9. At the last session, Brazil and Chile gave notice of certain developments in Latin America towards economic integration. At this session there is a possibility that rather more precise information about a proposal for a free trade area comprising Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil may be presented.

10. The Chairman of the CONTRACTING PARTIES (for 1959) is Senor Fernando Garcia Oldini, Ambassador of Chile in Switzerland.

11. On the invitation of the Japanese Government, the fifteenth session will be held in Tokyo in October-November 1959.