



## STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
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No. 54/58 THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

An address by the Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. C.D. Howe, at a meeting of the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, at Geneva, December 6, 1954.

It is a great pleasure for me to attend again a Session of the Contracting Parties. I have been interested in the development of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade since its early days. I count myself as one of its consistent supporters. The Canadian Government regards this agreement as an effective instrument for the promotion of world trade and the furtherance of our common economic objectives.

I have come here to consult with my own delegation and to study the issues of this conference at first-hand. I am grateful for the opportunity of addressing the Contracting Parties while I am here. You had a number of ministerial representatives in attendance earlier in the conference. By their standard, I am a late arrival. I was sorry to miss seeing them, because most of them are close friends.

My official duties were such that I had no choice but to come at this time. I am very interested in being here at this stage, however, when the real problems are emerging and the negotiations are beginning to take shape. Perhaps I should add, Mr. Chairman, that I have always been curious to find out why our Canadian representatives must spend such a long time at these GATT conferences. Possibly I shall now be able to reach some conclusions on this subject.

This is the most important session of the Contracting Parties since the General Agreement was first drafted. Our agreement has served the cause of world trade during seven years of severe and widespread difficulties. In spite of this, it is encouraging to reflect on the extent to which this Review Session of the General Agreement is a review of successes rather than failures.

Under GATT, world tariffs have been reduced and stabilized. Most-favoured-nation treatment has been generalized and extended to all our members. A common code of commercial conduct has been formulated, with increasing clarity and with increasing acceptance throughout the trading world.