

# *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade*

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING, GENEVA, 1967

**T**HE year 1967 was the twentieth anniversary of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which was signed by the representatives of 23 countries on October 30, 1947, when the proposed International Trade Organization failed to come into being. Since then, GATT's activities and membership have expanded until today the trade of almost 90 countries is governed by the Agreement.

The basic objective of GATT is the liberalization of world trade on a multilateral, non-discriminatory basis. It embodies contractual rights and obligations and provides detailed rules and procedures for the conduct of the commercial policies of Canada and its major trading partners.

Over the past 20 years, substantial progress has been made in achieving the objectives of the Agreement, culminating in the successful completion in mid-1967 of the Kennedy Round of trade and tariff negotiations, which achieved unprecedented results in reducing trade barriers in a wide range of internationally traded goods. Nevertheless, a good many obstacles to trade remain, including a number of non-tariff barriers which have assumed greater importance now that tariff levels are being significantly reduced.

It was in the light of these developments that GATT members, many of whom were represented at ministerial level, met in Geneva from November 22 to 24 at the end of the twenty-fourth session of the Contracting Parties to review GATT's work during the last two decades and to consider a future work programme and ways in which the momentum towards further liberalization of international trade could be maintained. The Canadian delegation was headed by the Honourable Robert H. Winters, Minister of Trade and Commerce, and included officials of the Departments of External Affairs, Finance, Trade and Commerce, Agriculture and Industry.

## **Concluding Statement**

The press release issued at the conclusion of the meeting reads, in part, as follows :

The Contracting Parties reaffirmed their confidence in the General Agreement as the contractual basis for their trading relationships and their determination to continue to co-operate in the trade field within the framework of the Agreement.

The Contracting Parties' discussion focused essentially on the GATT