

If the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade were to disappear, or if it were to be seriously weakened, our world-wide multilateral arrangements would dissolve, into regional blocs and currency groupings. Economic development would become more difficult. Prosperity would be undermined, to the extent that these groups of countries would then clash with each other's essential interests. There would be no effective means of resolving the conflicts.

Regional groups of countries provide a notoriously weak and unstable basis for trade. My delegation would not deny that regional trade arrangements may have served a real purpose, in exceptional circumstances, and for brief periods, when multilateral arrangements have broken down. In the difficult circumstances which have prevailed in Europe, regional arrangements accomplished a good deal in the way of liberalizing trade amongst the countries concerned. All such arrangements, however, finally reach the point where they cease to facilitate progress and, instead, they begin to make further progress difficult.

With few exceptions, there appears to be almost unanimous recognition of the limitations of regional solutions. The countries which now participate in discriminatory regional arrangements are evidently prepared, in most cases, to broaden and merge these arrangements into the multilateral trading world during the period that lies ahead. My delegation welcomes the general interest that is being shown in the strengthening of the rules of trade under GATT. This is, in our view, the most constructive way of dealing with the present situation.

This brings me to the end of my remarks, Mr. Chairman. My delegation will continue to participate in the detailed work of this Review Session with particular emphasis on the broad objectives to which I have referred. If the Contracting Parties can reach constructive conclusions, on the important subjects under review, they will have made a contribution almost beyond the limits of sober appraisal. The Canadian Government, and the general public in Canada, are awaiting with interest the constructive results of this Session. I shall leave here in a few days' time, but I shall continue to keep in very close touch with the progress of your work. If any useful purpose can be served by my returning at a later stage, I shall certainly attempt to do so. I wish to thank the representatives of the Contracting Parties for this opportunity of speaking. In closing, I leave you with my sincere best wishes for successful conclusions to your negotiations and their early termination, which I know you would all welcome.