

The Preparatory Committee held its first session in London from 15th October, 1946, to 26th November, 1946, and after examination and discussion of an amplified version of the original United States proposals a draft Charter was prepared.

This draft Charter was subsequently submitted for clarification and revision of its text to a Special Committee representative of all countries which attended the London session. This Special Drafting Committee met in New York from 20th January to 25th February, 1947, and revised the text further for submission to the second session of the Preparatory Committee.

This second session commenced at Geneva on 10th April, 1947, and completed its work on the text of the Charter on 23rd August of the same year. The final draft of the Charter as it emerged from the Preparatory Committee constituted the basis for discussion at the International Conference on Trade and Employment which was held at Havana from 21st November, 1947, until 24th March, 1948. The resultant Havana Charter is accordingly the culmination of many months of discussion and effort.

Of the seventy-one countries which were invited to the Havana Conference, fifty-eight accepted the invitation and attended. The following thirteen countries were invited but did not accept: Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussia, Ethiopia, Honduras, Hungary, Paraguay, Roumania, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, U.S.S.R., Yugoslavia, and Siam. Spain was not invited.

The Final Act of the Conference was signed by fifty-three countries. The external trade of the countries which attended was estimated to be approximately 90 per cent. of total world trade.

The countries present were represented by some five hundred delegates and advisers. Approximately eight hundred formal meetings were held, involving three thousand working-hours. New Zealand was represented by the following delegates and advisers :—

Rt Hon. W. Nash, Minister of Finance and Customs
(*Leader*).

Mr J. P. D. Johnsen, Assistant Comptroller of Customs
(*Deputy-Leader*).

Mr E. J. Fawcett, Director-General of Agriculture
(*Delegate*).