At its first meeting on 26 November, the General Committee laid down certain target dates for the termination of the work of the principal Committees in order to permit the completion of the Conference by 15 January 1948. These target dates were as follows:

- Committees I, IV and V, 20 December
- Committees II, III and VI, 31 December.

At the present rate of progress, there is no prospect of the Committees, with the possible exception of Committee I, adhering to this programme even approximately. This may be illustrated by the following examples:

1. Committee III has to date concluded the first reading of one Article and is engaged in the first reading of a second. The Committee has on its agenda twenty-seven Articles. At the present rate of progress, it would be a reasonably optimistic assumption that the first reading of Chapter IV would be completed by 15 January which is the date assumed by the General Committee for the termination of the Conference. The first reading has to be followed by the consideration of the Reports of Sub-Committees, a second reading in the light of these Reports and the adoption of a Report for presentation to the Conference.

2. Similarly, Committee II has so far considered three Articles which are of a comparatively uncontroversial nature and has not yet embarked on the discussion of the basic Articles which follow. It would, therefore, be unwise to be much more optimistic in the case of Committee II than that of Committee III. The same is true to a lesser extent of Committee VI.

In the light of this progress report, the General Committee may wish to consider the following alternatives:

(a) To recommend a modification of the procedure at present being followed.
followed in what is known as the "first reading" stage in order to limit debate to the principal issues in each chapter as brought out by the amendments submitted, leaving the examination of particular amendments to the sub-committees. At the same time, a recommendation might be made to committee chairmen to set up sub-committees with the objective of grouping and consolidating a number of individual amendments addressed to the same point; or

(b) To revise the committee's estimate as to the total duration of the conference and to make appropriate dispositions based upon a new set of target dates.

If the committee decides that the conference should, for the time being, continue on its present basis, it will be necessary to apply with greater flexibility the arrangement of meetings agreed upon at the first meeting of the general committee. Notwithstanding the proviso that this arrangement must be regarded as flexible, a number of delegations appear to regard the arrangement as rigid and to object to any variation. Now that there are a number of sub-committees, it is impossible to avoid clashes between various meetings of principal committees and sub-committees with consequent inconvenience to smaller delegations. If, however, this inconvenience is not accepted, then the consequence will be that the conference will, if only for this reason, continue for a substantial period beyond 15 January.