

(3) It is fitting that a tribute should be paid to the unremitting attention members of many local Committees give voluntarily to their duties. Many members have a record of service going back for nearly twenty years (in a few cases more than twenty years). Their services have rarely been publicly recognized; yet upon them rests the major task of the administration of apprenticeship. Now that they have full-time executive officers to assist them some of their tasks have been eased, but others, it must be confessed, have been added to them. Charged as they will be with the on-the-spot administration of New Zealand apprenticeship orders, they are an essential part of apprenticeship in New Zealand and admirable examples of democracy in practice.

*(d) Statistics of Apprentices*

(1) Details of the numbers of apprenticeship contracts in force at 31st March, 1948, and of the numbers of new contracts entered into during the twelve months up to that date are given in Table XIV in the Appendix to this report. The number of apprentices whose contracts are suspended while they are in the Armed Forces has now declined to 317. Excluding these apprentices, there were actually 12,818 apprenticeship contracts in force on 31st March, a decrease of 59 on last year's figures. The number of new contracts entered into is 3,396, the highest number recorded since 1935. Of the new contracts, 933 were in the building trades.

(2) Although it can safely be said that recruitment to the skilled trades is in general very satisfactory, there are particular trades in which the needs of industry are by no means being met by the very limited number of lads willing to enter upon apprenticeships in them. Such essential trades as moulding, boilermaking, blacksmithing, and saddlery are poorly supplied with entrants, and others, like baking and hairdressing are far from getting all the recruits they need.

*(e) Lodging-allowances for Apprentices*

The Amendment Act of 1946 made provision, in section 22, for the payment of lodging-allowances to apprentices obliged to live away from home to learn a trade. The Apprentices Regulations 1947 which were in the main concerned with the forms and procedure required for the administration of the statutes, included a scale of payments of lodging-allowances. These range from £65 a year for apprentices receiving up to 23 per cent. of journeymen's wages to £10 a year to those receiving between 53 per cent. and 59 per cent. In the three months during which these allowances have been payable (since 1st January, 1948), 241 have been authorized.

*(f) Adult Apprenticeships*

(1) Persons over eighteen years of age desiring to enter upon contracts of apprenticeship are able, if they wish, to apply for special contracts, to which the provisions of the relevant apprenticeship order do not necessarily apply. The Court of Arbitration must give its approval to any such proposal for a special contract.

(2) During the twelve months there were 113 special contracts approved by the Court. It is to be expected that, as the numbers of men whom the 1939-45 war deprived of opportunity to learn a trade decline, the number of adult apprenticeships will shrink, for only quite "special" circumstances will warrant application for apprenticeships being made by adults.