

The District Registrar may in any case refuse to register a contract of apprenticeship if he considers that the Act or any regulation or order of the Court or Committee has not been complied with. He may also, if he thinks fit, withhold registration for any other reason (such as a doubt as to the capacity of the employer to teach or the suitability of the trade or factory), and refer the question to the committee (or to the Court if there is no committee); in such case he shall be guided by its decision. A total of eighty-one applications for registration have been refused—thirty-five at the instance of committees and forty-six by District Registrars alone. There is a right of appeal to the Court against all refusals to register, and there have been five such appeals, the Court deciding against the appellant in each case.

Section 10 empowers the committee (or the Court) to authorize two or more employers in the same locality to enter into a contract with the same apprentice. One such contract has been approved in the motor-engineering trade in Auckland. This provision of the Act was copied from an Australian Act, and was inserted to meet the case of intermittent trades, such as building; the several employers would jointly undertake the responsibility of teaching one or more boys, transferring them from one employer to another as the circumstances rendered necessary. It was anticipated that the clause would be found useful in the building trade in New Zealand.

Section 11 empowers a committee (or the Court) to authorize special contracts of apprenticeship in the cases of adults or of other persons already possessing some knowledge of an industry. There are many instances where an adult, after having learned an occupation, has found that the trade has become slack, or that it is unsuitable for him, or that the conditions of work therein have changed through the introduction of machinery; in such cases it is desirable to encourage the learning of a new skilled calling. When an application is made, the duty of the committee or Court is to see that an employer does not obtain an undue advantage by thus securing the services of an adult at the wages and other conditions fixed for boys. Two hundred and nine special contracts have been approved.

Section 9: The Registrar and District Registrars are vested with authority to take proceedings for breaches of the Act, regulations, orders, &c. There have been 127 prosecutions, of which fifteen have been against apprentices. Of the prosecutions taken against apprentices, thirteen were for failing to attend the technical schools when ordered to do so by the committees, and two were for leaving their employment. In ten cases fines were imposed, while three cases—one for leaving the employment and two for failing to attend the technical schools—were withdrawn or struck out on the boys' undertaking to fulfil their obligations in future.

An attempt to evade the provisions of the Act occurred during the year in Auckland, where it had been deemed necessary to refuse registration of a contract of apprenticeship with a worker. The employer thereupon entered into what purported to be a deed of partnership between himself, the worker, and the worker's father. The Department took proceedings against the employer for failing to pay the journeymen's award rate of wages to the worker concerned, and obtained judgment, the Court holding that the alleged partnership was merely a device to defeat the provisions of the Apprentices Act.

AWARD AND AGREEMENT RATES IN SKILLED, SEMI-SKILLED, AND UNSKILLED INDUSTRIES.

The following comparison may be of interest to those concerned in the apprenticeship question, as showing the award and industrial-agreement rates in the skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled occupations.

Minimum Wages fixed (1) in Industries which employ Apprentices.

Except where otherwise indicated, the rates shown are those in force in Wellington, and the hours are forty-four per week. Apprenticeship period five years, except plumbers (six years).

Industry.	Award Rates for Ordinary Work.
Bakers	£5 per week of forty-six hours; approximately 2s. 2d. per hour full time. (Ten specified holidays and eight working-days' annual holiday on pay. No deduction from wages except for time lost through workers' sickness or default.)
Blacksmiths	2s. 3d. per hour. Extra rates for special work.
Boilermakers	2s. 3d. per hour. Extra rates for special work.
Bricklayers	2s. 3½d. per hour. Extra rates for special work.
Carpenters—	
Factory workers	2s. 3d. per hour. Extra rates for special work.
Outside workers	2s. 3½d. per hour. Extra rates for special work.
Coachworkers	2s. 3d. per hour (forty-seven hours per week).
Electrical workers	2s. 3d. per hour.
Engineers	2s. 3d. per hour. Extra rates for special work.
Furniture-makers	2s. 3d. per hour.
Iron and brass moulders ..	2s. 3d. per hour.
Motor mechanics	2s. 3d. per hour.
Painters	2s. 3d. per hour. Extra rate for special work.
Plasterers	2s. 4½d. per hour. Extra rate for special work.
Plumbers	2s. 3d. per hour. Extra rates for special work.
Saddlers	2s. 2d. per hour. (Forty-eight hours per week.)