

Proposal 1 :—

- (a) That the chief purpose of technical schools is the training of apprentices for industry, supplementary to workshop training.
- (b) Whether the chief work of the day classes at schools should be the preparation of boys for industry before commencing employment.

Mr. W. McLEOD said that the matter was raised with a view to the improvement of the trade education of youths, such training having developed very little in New Zealand. It was desirable that the Conference should arrive at some definite recommendation to place before the Minister of Education. With regard to section (b) of the remit, he was of opinion that that should be struck out, so that the maximum amount of money would be available for the more important evening classes, and the training of those boys who were actually apprenticed. There was much difficulty in getting equipment and accommodation for boys attending night classes, and the numbers were increasing year by year.

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS instanced a similar difficulty in obtaining equipment for the teaching of the printing trade in Christchurch. It was his opinion that the Government should step in and make arrangements with some of the printing firms for the boys to get practical knowledge there.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL moved: That one of the chief purposes of technical schools is the training of apprentices for industry, supplementary to workshop training.

The DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION said that he valued the opportunity of meeting men closely associated with both industries and technical schools. So far as opinions had then been expressed he was very largely in agreement with what had been said. The technical schools should devote themselves mainly to the preparation of apprentices for industry, greater attention being paid to the theoretical side than to the practical; at the same time it was a very dangerous thing to differentiate theory from practice. The great problem was to know how far to go along the practical line. The Education Department did not wish to stint technical schools of equipment, but had to guard against equipping them too lavishly. Owing to the varied and scattered nature of secondary industries in New Zealand it was very difficult indeed to suitably equip technical schools. Probably the equipment in the technical schools had developed more along engineering than other lines, and though the opinion had been expressed that there was too much practice indulged in in the technical schools, he did not think so himself. At the same time he agreed that employers of apprentices had not the time to deal with the theory of their particular industry, and it was left mainly to the technical schools to do this. Though in his opinion the technical schools should deal mainly with theory, there should nevertheless be a sufficient amount of equipment to show the general application of the principles. With regard to the practice of establishing hobby classes in technical schools—more the case many years ago than now—he believed that we had quite enough to do to equip the technical schools for those who were earnestly intending their life's work to be in industry. Hobby classes should be self-supporting; at the same time, if there was room in the technical schools he did not think they should be excluded; a broad view must be taken of technical education.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL considered that theory should not be made predominant. Any one who knew anything about the painting trade would see that it was impossible to separate entirely the theoretical from the practical.

Mr. A. RICE said that if it was stated that theory must predominate it was practically a mandate to all Technical School Boards and Apprenticeship Committees to work on those particular lines. He thought they should leave it in a broad sense, and not make it mandatory to teach theory only, but to combine theory with practice—leave it to the discretion of the different committees in the particular centres to work on broad lines.

Mr. G. T. THURSTON moved, That the following words be added to the motion: "in order that such may be given to the best possible advantage, the Government and Education Department be urged to comply with the practical requests of Trade Committees established in each centre in conjunction with each trade." He did that because it was impossible to differentiate the theory from the practice—it was very hard to determine where to start and where to finish. They had Trade Committees in Christchurch working in conjunction with the Instructors at the Technical College; those Trade Committees made recommendations to the Board or to the Government in regard to the equipment required for each particular trade with which they were connected; therefore they were in absolute touch with the business.

Mr. H. BRADLEY was of the opinion that the management of technical schools should be left to those in charge. While they should make suggestions to them, he did not think a dictatorial suggestion on the lines of the amendment should be considered. As a suggestion it was quite all right. It was not always possible, and he thought they should not interfere with the management of the technical schools.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the whole thing would be a recommendation to the Government, not a mandate.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL submitted that it was only the trade classes that were going to be of any advantage to the working community in following their walk of life, and for that reason he thought there should be more support and more consideration given to the technical side of the general industry of the country.

The amendment was carried, the motion now reading: "That one of the chief purposes of technical schools is the training of apprentices for industry, supplementary to workshop training, and that in order that such may be given to the best possible advantage the Government and the Education Department be urged to comply with the practical requests of Trade Committees established in each centre in conjunction with each trade."

It was agreed that part (b) of the remit be struck out.