

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS said that in many cases boys did not consider the taking up of technical-school courses until eighteen months or three years after leaving school, and then could not avail themselves of those privileges. He thought it should be made possible for every boy to get those advantages.

Mr. AUSTIN explained that a boy who had not taken up his junior free place within the period allowed but carried on as a paying student was eligible to receive a senior free place; so that there was still further technical education open to a boy if he had worked satisfactorily during the two years and was favourably reported on.

In view of the explanation given the Conference resolved: That it be a recommendation to the Education Department that it make its facilities for free technical education more fully known.

Proposal 5: That technical training of apprentices be carried out during working-hours.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL considered it was the employer's duty to train the boys in the employer's time, not for the boy to spend some part of his own time.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL contended that it was hardly fair to expect a boy to work eight hours at his particular trade and then go two or three nights a week to put in another two hours learning the technical side of it. We had got out of the groove of having been born just to work and then to die. The majority of society held that there should be some pleasure in life as well as work. They wanted the boys to be trained thoroughly in their different trades, but the instructors had found often that they were not capable of assimilating the knowledge that the instructors desired to impart, after having had to work eight hours at their particular trade.

Mr. E. R. B. HOLBEN said that it would be a physical impossibility in some trades to allow apprentices to go away to attend technical training. In the electrical trade they must have a boy with the man to draw the wires through the conduit. In any case they could not possibly send a man out on a job without his boy; they could not possibly allow their boys off in fairness to the men and in fairness to the customers—it would not be fair to the trade.

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS asked how employers managed with regard to military drill. They had to do without the boys then—they had no option. If the boy was going to get good technical education it was to the advantage of the employer, and the employer should be prepared to share the burden.

Mr. D. A. PICKERING pointed out that the motion might very well suit the cities, but in the country towns it was not applicable, as in the country towns they had not full-time instructors. The instructors for the different trades being drawn from the ranks of the workers, day-time instruction would mean full-time instructors and more expense to the State.

Mr. A. C. MITCHELL opposed the motion, and said that it had been suggested that the sending of the boys to technical training on a Saturday morning would not be a serious inconvenience to the employer; but it would be interesting to consider for a moment what the effect of sending a boy to technical training would be on the overhead establishment charges. In some cases, where they worked in pairs, it might justify the employer closing down on Saturday morning. Overhead expenses had to be divided into the forty-four working-hours, and they were considerably increased if they were divided into forty parts, and that was an element of expense that was reflected in the cost of production. He thought any fair-minded critic looking at the matter dispassionately must agree that it would make such a disturbance in the economic conditions that it was not a safe thing to attempt. Those who had shouldered their responsibility with regard to apprentices would be forced as an economic measure to reconsider their position.

Mr. W. MADDISON supported the motion, and said that scientific research had shown quite conclusively that the longer the hours worked the less efficiency there was, both in quantity and in quality; and if that was so in the case of adults it must also be equally true in the case of boys. They were looking for great efficiency, but by making the boys work above the normal number of hours they were doing not merely an injustice to the boy, but an injustice to a certain extent to the nation at large.

Mr. S. DAVIS opposed the motion, and suggested that attendance at technical schools should be limited to two nights per week instead of three as at present.

The motion was lost.

Proposal 6: That apprentices be exempt from military training while attending trade classes.

Carried unanimously, without discussion.

Proposal 7: That correspondence classes be instituted for country apprentices.

Mr. J. PATTERSON thought that every boy working in the country ought to have the right to technical-school training, and if there was no technical school in the district it ought to be done by correspondence.

Mr. A. RICE said that if the remit were carried as outlined it would be a move in the right direction; it would certainly give the assistance they required in their own centre, and he thought it would be of particular advantage to the country at large. There was not the slightest doubt apprentices in the small towns did require some tuition in the trade which they had taken up, and if it were not possible to institute classes in the particular town, then at least correspondence courses should be adopted for their advantage.

Mr. W. H. WINSOR said that they should be careful not to carry the scheme so far that it would take boys off the land.

Mr. G. FLEMING supported the motion, stating that it would be of advantage to a scattered district like Taranaki.

The motion was carried unanimously.