

Proposal 8 : Question of small centres and minimum number of pupils required to establish classes under qualified instructors.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that he thought it a matter for the Education Department.

Mr. W. McLEOD stated that in the country towns they were up against the difficulty that there were not sufficient members to comply with the regulations of the Department as regards the number of apprentices required for any evening classes. That was a great hardship to the boys in the small towns—some apprentices could not attend schools because they did not have instructors.

Mr. J. PATTERSON mentioned that at present, according to the regulations, they must have twelve students in a class before they could have an instructor. He moved: That for intermediate towns the number of students to make a class in ordinary trade courses should be reduced from twelve to eight.

Mr. M. BROWN suggested that in the larger centres, for which the quota for ordinary trade classes is fifteen, the number be reduced from fifteen to twelve. In some of the trades in the larger centres it was very difficult indeed in quite a number of subjects to establish a class of fifteen.

After discussion, the motion was carried in the following form: That the quota for ordinary trade classes be reduced from fifteen to twelve in the large centres, and from twelve to eight in the intermediate towns.

Proposal 9 : That the Education Department be urged to make it possible for evening-school expert manual instructors who do not hold University degrees or their equivalent to receive salaries equal to instructors holding degrees.

The CHAIRMAN thought this was hardly a matter for the Apprenticeship Conference to consider.

Mr. J. PATTERSON said that they might have an expression of opinion on the matter in order to ventilate the difficulties they had had during past years.

Mr. E. A. WILLIAMS and Mr. F. D. CORNWELL pointed out that they had had difficulty in getting proper instructors because the salaries paid by Technical College Boards were so small.

Mr. J. PATTERSON considered that the reason why they did not get good men in this country was that the country did not offer the money, and he thought they should make a recommendation to the Education Department to try and import good instructors, especially in view of the last remit regarding starting correspondence classes.

Mr. A. C. MITCHELL said that it would appear from the discussion that the reference in the remit was not to the regular tutors employed in the technical college, but to relieving tradesmen who came in at night to supplement the efforts of the teaching staff. He maintained that whatever salary was paid to the purely practical instructor in the technical college, it should not be the equivalent of the salary paid to the man who in his youth had taken the technical as well as the practical and had qualified for the degree. The extra training involved was worth the extra remuneration. He had no objection whatever to an increase for the part-time teacher, but he wanted to make that distinction quite clear—the man with both practical and technical attainments should be worth more than the man with the purely practical attainments.

Mr. T. BAKER instanced a case of a carpenter who was full-time instructor at a technical school and considered that he should be paid a salary equal to that of a teacher who had a University degree.

Mr. E. R. B. HOLBEN considered that in the majority of the trades it was far better to give the apprentices a practical man rather than a theoretical man. An ounce of practice was worth a ton of theory.

The motion was carried.

Proposal 10 : That in small towns where no evening classes are held, apprentices be conveyed free to the nearest technical school.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL said that it was often a hardship on parents to pay train fares for youngsters to attend classes, maybe ten or fifteen miles distant, but if they could get there they should be encouraged to attend.

Mr. M. BROWN said that by passing the remit they would be helping those who were really not forced to attend but who were anxious to attend and so obtain better training.

Mr. E. A. WILLIAMS stated that in Napier the first part of the Technical School—the workshops—had been built, and they would be enabled to have and to equip a better, a bigger, and a more efficient centre there if apprentices from the surrounding districts, including Hastings, could be got into the school, and they could then attract better instructors.

The motion was carried.

Proposal 11 : That the Technological Examination now instituted by the New Zealand Education Department be substituted for local examinations under apprenticeship orders.

Mr. A. F. SANDFORD stated that the idea behind it was that instead of each district or each technical school having its own examinations in certain subjects there should be Dominion papers covering the whole of the Dominion.

Mr. C. TATTERSFIELD and Mr. J. PATTERSON considered that the City and Guilds Examination would not now be required, but that any one desiring to take the City and Guilds Examination in addition might do so.

The motion was carried unanimously.