

seemed to him they would never improve their standard of workmanship or trade throughout the country until they gave some recognition to the boy who had gone through a period of apprenticeship. He had heard many a time at every conference the argument that they had men in the trade who were incompetent. He suggested that unless they had a certificate of that kind the Apprenticeship Act was useless. What use was it drawing up regulations to ensure apprentices becoming competent tradesmen unless some recognition of that fact was given to the competent tradesmen? In other countries it was done. The employers said they bore some of the expense of training the apprentices, and if they had borne that expense they should have some guarantee that the person they were going to employ had gone through that period of apprenticeship, either with them or with some other person in the country. He thought the provision of a certificate of that kind was an essential part of the Apprenticeship Act, and without it, in his opinion, the Apprenticeship Act conferred no benefit whatever, either on the community or on the individuals concerned. If it was necessary—and it had been held to be necessary—to protect the community against incompetent plumbers or incompetent electrical wiremen, by means of a certificate, then it seemed to him to be equally important that the community should be protected against incompetent tradesmen in any branch of industry. An incompetent tradesman might not endanger property or health, yet he was lowering the standard of the trade or industry in which he was engaged. He submitted that they ought to pass the motion, and that they ought to see it carried into effect though whether it would have the result some imagined was a matter open to question.

Mr. H. BRADLEY thought they would all agree that when a boy had finished the term of his apprenticeship he was not fully qualified to put "Certificated" after his name. At the same time he thought there was no doubt a boy having served his term of apprenticeship should be entitled to a certificate, and that certificate should be recognized by the trade, by the union, by the employer, and by the public; but he thought they would be doing a service to the community if they suggested that after a period of another few years a higher standard should be set, and after a tradesman had passed that higher standard of efficiency he should then be entitled to put letters or words after his name. But if at the end of the five years' apprenticeship a boy became fully qualified, and entitled to put letters after his name, then they should also make it possible for all those men who had already gone through that period—and men of all ages at all trades—to be given the opportunity of going through the same examination. He thought they should give that incentive for a man to improve his knowledge.

Mr. W. MADDISON considered that the committee was the proper body to take the matter in hand. They had had the suggestion that at a later stage of a man's life, when he was about twenty-five years of age, he might sit for an examination that he was further qualified. Under all the circumstances he thought that would be doing a manifest wrong to those apprentices who were fully qualified, who had gone through the whole of their training and had come out of it with honours. They were in duty bound to give those boys the certificate as far as it went and for what it was worth.

Mr. W. McLEOD thought that if some certificate were granted it would be something for a boy to work for, and it would raise the standard of work in the school and in the workshop.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL said that the remit proposed an examination, and if they were not qualified after the examination of course they were not certificated, and therefore the point of the remit was that the Examination Board should be set up. The certificate should not only be for ability, but general behaviour and so on should be taken into consideration. He thought it would do a great deal of good both for employers and workers.

Mr. A. FLETCHER objected to a man who had been, say, thirty years at the trade not being allowed to call himself a certificated man because he could not pass the examination, and yet a boy of nineteen or twenty could pass the examination and call himself a certificated tradesman.

Mr. T. BAKER suggested that this matter could easily be adjusted by exempting all existing tradesmen from the examination and just making it apply to the present and future apprentices.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the Conference had passed a remit that the technological examination now instituted by the New Zealand Education Department be substituted for local examinations under apprenticeship orders. They now had a proposal that the committee be authorized to issue certificates; he submitted that if they agreed to a certificate it should be a certificate issued by some one the Conference had already agreed to.

After further discussion the following motion was passed unanimously: That this Conference recommends the Government, on the request of and in consultation with one or more Apprenticeship Committees, to institute examinations—practical and theoretical, as may be deemed advisable—for any of the trades to which the Act applies. Any worker engaged in any such trade, whether he has been an apprentice or not, shall (if he has served five years therein) be entitled to sit for such examination. Any person who has passed such examination shall be entitled to a certificate of the fact.

Proposal 15: That members of committees receive fees, to be prescribed by regulation, and that committees' expenses be paid.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL said that quite a lot of time was given to the Apprenticeship Committees by the members. They wanted some fees that would be prescribed as a recognition that the Apprenticeship Committees were doing good and satisfactory work. They did not want to make it too big—they would then have professional members coming in. They wanted to avoid that.

Mr. J. PATTERSON stated that in his district they had to visit several people away from the town, and he thought they should get something for their services.

Mr. E. R. B. HOLBEN said that they should not make it a monetary concern—it was a labour of love.