

Mr. W. McLEOD said that the Apprenticeship Act was designed to try and better the conditions of apprenticeship in New Zealand. Up to the present time it had not done that completely. In many trades more apprentices could be employed without exceeding the present quota. Last year there was a total shortage of apprentices under the quota of three thousand all over the Dominion. At the present moment he was assured by one of the largest employers in the engineering trade in Wanganui that there were seventy-five boys in that trade in the Wellington district less than the quota allowed. Until such time as the Apprenticeship Act operated to the fullest extent in this matter, he thought it was futile for them to pass this resolution.

Mr. G. MILLS-PALMER said that he wanted to make it quite clear that there was no suggestion in this resolution of abolishing the quota, or of opening the door unreservedly to the employment of apprentices. As far as the employer himself was concerned, he could still be bound by the quota which was authorized by the Court. The suggestion was that the Apprenticeship Committees in the different districts, who were taking a vital interest in this matter, should have the power to relax those regulations at their discretion, and that it should be their duty to see that that power was not relaxed except in those cases which could absorb the journeymen. They would not take very many—they could not do it—they could not swamp the industries; but they would relieve that position to a certain extent. They should put forward some constructive proposal. They posed as experts, and had come at the invitation of the Government to advise the Government. Who was competent if they were not? He submitted it was the duty of the Conference to put this proposal before the Government.

A vote was taken, resulting as follows: For the motion, 17; against the motion, 17.

The CHAIRMAN gave his original vote against the motion, and said he was not prepared under the circumstances to give a casting-vote.

Proposal 19: That the employer shall be required to notify the Registrar of the completion of any apprenticeship; and the District Registrar, on being satisfied that the contract of apprenticeship has been completed, shall endorse the contract held by the apprentice.

After a brief discussion the motion was carried.

Proposal 20: That section 8 (6) of the Apprentices Act, 1923, be amended by deleting the words "District Registrar," and substituting the words "Apprenticeship Committee."

The motion was carried without discussion.

Proposal 21: That section 15 of the Apprentices Act, 1923, be amended to provide that a dismissed apprentice shall have the right of appeal to an Apprenticeship Committee, with further appeal to the Court in order to bring into line with section 5 (4) (b) and section 6 (2).

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS said that it seemed to him that if the Apprenticeship Committee had the right to grant apprenticeships, they certainly should have the right to cancel them. Further, that there should be a right of appeal to the Court if either side felt they were aggrieved by the decision. There was no doubt in his mind that the Apprenticeship Committee should deal with the whole business of indentures.

Mr. S. E. WRIGHT thought it should be made mandatory that all these cases of dismissal should go before the Apprenticeship Committee first, and suggested that the proposal be worded as follows: "That section 15 be amended to provide that a dismissed apprentice shall first appeal to an Apprenticeship Committee, with a further appeal to the Court." The apprentice, he said, still had a further right of appeal to the Court.

After a little further discussion the motion was carried in the form suggested by Mr. Wright.

Proposal 22: That instead of instant dismissal the employer may be empowered only to suspend an apprentice until such time as evidence is heard by committee.

Several delegates gave instances of hardship caused to apprentices by the present method of dismissal, and urged the desirability of amendment on the lines of the remit.

The motion was carried.

Proposal 23: That appeals under the Act should be heard in camera (or that apprentices' names be not published).

After a brief discussion the motion was lost.

Proposal 24: That section 8 (8) of the Apprentices Act, 1923, be amended by adding the words "within, say twenty-eight days of such termination, transfer, or discharge."

The motion was carried without discussion.

Proposal 25: To add to section 4 (4) of the Apprentices Act, 1923, "In any case where no committee has been appointed, or where the Court is of opinion that the powers of a committee are not exercised in a satisfactory manner, it may authorize the District Registrar to exercise any of such powers."

The motion was carried without discussion.