

Mr. G. T. THURSTON said that in his opinion the apprentice who was engaged in the trade be the first consideration of that trade.

Mr. E. R. B. HOLBEN said that, as an employer of labour, he liked to get the boys as soon as he could after they had left school, so that he could inculcate into them his method and get them adapted to his system of carrying out the work. It was a pity that these boys were thrown on the world, but it seemed to him employers were asked to shoulder a responsibility that was unjust to them.

Mr. W. H. WINSOR said that he thought they had the power at the present time to do this. They wanted boys—technical-college boys who had gone through their course with credit and were going to be splendid tradesmen; those were the boys naturally that an employer wanted; but he would ask employers at the same time to be sympathetic to these other boys, and if they got the chance to put them on that they take them on, by permission of the committee, even if they already had their quota.

Mr. A. FLETCHER considered that if any employer were forced to take a boy that he did not want in preference to a boy he did want, the attitude he would take up would be, "If I can't take that one I won't have either," and he was quite satisfied there would be fewer apprentices than there were at the present time. He felt sure the bulk of the employers would look at the matter from a sympathetic viewpoint.

Mr. S. E. WRIGHT pointed out that the effect of this would be that an employer wishing to take his own son possibly would be debarred from engaging him as an apprentice.

Mr. A. F. SANDFORD thought they should leave it to committees to deal with, as they were doing now, and then he did not think there would be any trouble.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL agreed that it was the committees' function purely and simply to look after the boys, and the only way of doing it was to ask the committees not to let new boys enter a trade until these other boys had been absorbed.

The motion was lost.

Proposal 35: That any person becoming an employer within the meaning of the Act shall register with the nearest District Registrar of Apprentices within fourteen days after commencing business. It was also suggested that failure to register should be deemed to be a breach of the Act and subject to a penalty.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL said that he was instructed to move this remit on behalf of the electrical trades. The reason for it was that there had been so many small employers springing up during a boom in the electrical trades and the first thing they did was to take an apprentice. It was the custom in the electrical trades that if a man were drawing wires he must have a boy to help him, and there were so many of these little employers that they could not keep track of them all; that was the reason why they wanted these people to be registered, so that they could know exactly who and what they were.

Mr. S. BROWN suggested that a man should be in the district at least six months before he was registered. There were so many travelling men at the present time, who came into the town for a few months, employed a boy, and then left that boy out of work.

Mr. S. E. WRIGHT did not think there was any necessity for this resolution. The matter might well be left in the hands of the committees to inquire into the teaching facilities of an employer who wanted an apprentice before he was allowed to have that apprentice.

The CHAIRMAN considered the position quite efficiently safeguarded under the present Act.

Mr. W. MADDISON thought this clause would assist very materially in placing more reliable information before the committees when the indentures came up. They should at any rate ascertain where a man was in business, and just exactly how long he had been. As it was now, they simply had to take a man's word. There were men to his knowledge who had been in and out of business half a dozen times during the last fourteen years. They took one or two jobs, came to grief, and went back into the trade as journeymen. After the lapse of a few months they started afresh as employers; and that was the sort of men to whom they should not be inclined to grant an apprentice.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Proposal 36: That all employers before employing an apprentice shall make application to the Apprenticeship Committee, or to the District Registrar of Apprentices where no committees are set up, for permission to employ an apprentice, and shall not employ such apprentice without first obtaining such permission.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL said that all the Apprenticeship Committees that had that amendment to their order were working satisfactorily, and it seemed to be a great advantage to everybody concerned. This was a proposal to bring the other apprenticeship orders, that had not got it, into line with those that had.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL said it was practically legalizing the practice that was operating at the present time, and which was in all the orders that had been amended.

Mr. H. N. SCROGGS considered that if this clause was inserted it would clear the way for giving the committees an opportunity of seeing what sort of establishment a particular employer had before he took a boy on, because it was far better for him not to employ a boy at all than to employ a boy as an apprentice and then for the boy to be put out with perhaps no possibility of taking up that particular trade again.

Mr. A. FLETCHER did not agree with it. The committee had ample powers to say, when a contract came before them, whether the employer was a suitable individual or not, and whether they