

1929.
NEW ZEALAND.

APPRENTICESHIP CONFERENCE, 1929.

Laid on the Table by Leave of the House.

CONDENSED REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

THE Conference opened at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, the 7th May, 1929.

Present :—

		Employers.		Workers.
Auckland	..	G. Mills-Palmer	..	T. Bloodworth.
		S. E. Wright	..	H. Campbell.
Gisborne ..	..	C. Tattersfield	..	W. Horne.
Napier ..	..	E. A. Williams	..	T. Baker.
New Plymouth	..	A. F. Sandford	..	G. Fleming.
Wanganui	..	J. Patterson	..	W. McLeod.
Palmerston North	..	E. R. B. Holben	..	H. N. Scroggs.
Masterton..	..	D. A. Pickering	..	S. Brown.
Wellington	..	A. C. Mitchell	..	F. D. Cornwell.
		A. Fletcher	..	W. Maddison.
Nelson ..	..	W. Wilmot	..	S. Davis.
Greymouth	..	P. Hambleton	..	G. Batty.
Christchurch	..	W. H. Winsor	..	G. T. Thurston.
		H. Bradley	..	J. W. Roberts.
Timaru ..	..	W. Petrie	..	R. Cairns.
Dunedin ..	..	A. Munro	..	M. Brown.
		W. R. Hayward	..	A. Rice.
Invercargill	..	A. J. Ball	..	W. J. Thomas.

Education Department : Mr. T. B. Strong, Director of Education.

Labour Department : Mr. F. W. Rowley, Secretary of Labour.

The meeting was opened by the Hon. W. A. VEITCH, Minister of Labour.

The MINISTER, in expressing to the delegates, on behalf of the Government, a cordial welcome to the Conference table, said that this was a Conference chiefly consisting of members of Apprenticeship Committees and entirely consisting of gentlemen who had been appointed by Apprenticeship Committees for the purpose of advising the Government on the questions that would be referred to them. He felt sure that the Government could fully rely on the Conference for conscientious advice by men who were directly experienced in the administration of the Apprentices Act. They were entitled to be regarded as a body of men who had given their services without fee or reward for no purpose other than the desire to improve the general conditions of apprenticeship service and teaching throughout the Dominion. He was sure that they would recognize the fact that the method and extent of the teaching that was given to boys in learning their trade was of the utmost importance in every country in the world, and was of paramount importance in a young country that was in the early stages of its development. The history of all the older countries of the world showed that they began by cultivating the land—farming was the exclusive occupation of the people; and as the years went by the boys merged into other lines of industry—secondary industries developed; and if they looked back over the history of the Mother-country itself they would find that her power, her greatness really began when she merged into the second stage of her existence—namely, the development of secondary industries in addition to production from the land. New Zealand, in his estimation—though he might express an opinion with which a great many people differed—was merging into the stage of her existence in which secondary industries would play an increasingly important part. At this juncture it was extremely important that the conditions under which apprentices were trained should receive the most careful attention of responsible men who really understood the problem, and the delegates present were entitled to be regarded as such.

Some of the disabilities that were found in the older countries were that apprenticeship was a little too practical, and a great deal of the scientific knowledge which it was so desirable that an apprentice should acquire had been disregarded, and that was one of the points that he would like to impress upon the minds of the members of the Conference. They needed not only the handicraft of a trade to be taught, but in addition to that they wanted definite means whereby the maximum of scientific knowledge might be acquired by apprentices.

Another feature of the industrial situation, though not exclusively concerned with the problem of apprenticeship, was the fact that in all the older countries where industrial work was developed on a large scale there had been a tendency for the confinement of industrial life to detrimentally affect the physique and even the mentality of the people. The great problem which New-Zealanders should constantly bear in mind in dealing with matters connected with industrial development and the training of the young people was not only to see to it that they were thoroughly taught their business, but that the new creations of industry as they came along were such that those detrimental defects that existed in other countries should not be allowed to prevail here. In that way they must create in their industries within New Zealand such living and working conditions as would, as far as possible, increase the wealth and prosperity of the country, but never to such an extent as to affect the general well-being and physical conditions of the people.

He felt quite sure that the business of the Conference would not be approached from the point of view of one class attempting to secure an advantage over another; accepting membership of that Conference was accepting a national responsibility to give the Government the best advice they could from the point of view of their own expert knowledge, not for the benefit of any section of the people, but for the common good of all the people and the general advancement of the whole Dominion.

He did not propose to make any suggestions to them as to the conclusions he thought they should arrive at; that, he thought, would be quite a wrong thing for him to do. He had invited them here to give him their advice, and he certainly was not disposed to begin by offering advice. He wanted the Conference to have a free hand and to express its opinions without fear or prejudice, and assured them that any opinions or recommendations that were sent from the Conference to the Government would receive careful consideration as the honest opinions of a group of men who had acquired a great deal of experience in the administration of the Act.

As the delegates would remember, when that Act became law the circumstances were quite peculiar and unusual. It came on at the very end of a session when it was doubtful whether it would be possible to get the Bill through the House at all; it came along as a result of a Conference between the representatives of labour on the one hand and employers on the other. They had come to an agreement, and they recommended Parliament to pass a measure; Parliament agreed and passed it without discussion. They either had to pass it in that way or not at all; and, seeing that the parties chiefly concerned had agreed upon the measure, the House accepted it without comment. There was one very considerable weakness that arose in a case such as that. As they knew, parliamentary procedure provided for certain discussions and investigations, and when these were passed over in the interests of urgency they sometimes found that certain weaknesses existed. The manner in which the Apprentices Act was passed justified this Conference. It had now been law sufficiently long to enable the committees to have quite definite opinions as to what amendments of that law were needed at the present time, and that was the chief thought in the back of his mind and in the mind of the Government in asking the Conference to meet.

He did not think it would be necessary for him to say any more at that time. He was only occupying the Chair until they had elected their own Chairman. He proposed to remain in the Chair while the roll was being called; that would establish every one's right to vote; having done that he would ask them to appoint a Chairman from their own number, and when the Chairman had been appointed he would hand the control of the Conference over to him feeling fully confident that they would give the Government the best advice that they were able to give in the light of their very considerable and varied experience on apprenticeship problems.

On the motion of Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Fletcher, Mr. T. Bloodworth was unanimously elected to the Chair.

Mr. A. FLETCHER said that he would like to hear something from the Minister, and also from Mr. Rowley, in connection with the matter of the payment of apprentices during training in camp.

The Hon. W. A. VEITCH, in reply, said that he thought it would be rather a wrong thing for him to give the Conference a lead on a matter like that. He had quite a definite opinion on the matter, but whatever the Conference recommended would be very carefully considered, and he thought he knew what the Conference would recommend. He did not think, however, it was desirable that the Minister should attempt to lead the Conference in any direction in connection with any matter that was on the agenda paper, but he could assure them that any recommendation from the Conference would be very seriously considered. As for Mr. Rowley's view on the matter, Mr. Rowley was the Secretary of the Department. His business was to carry out the Government's policy; and he (Hon. Mr. Veitch) considered that it was not quite the usual thing to ask the head of a Department to make a declaration of policy; it might have been the practice in the past, but it was not going to be the practice under the present Government, which was going to have its own policy and carry it through. He would certainly not give the Conference a lead in any direction at all. It was not right for him to ask a group of responsible gentlemen to confer and make recommendations on a particular subject and then attempt to dictate to that Conference as to the decisions it should arrive at. He was sure it would be recognized as quite a wrong and unconstitutional thing for a Minister to do.

If there were no other questions he would ask Mr. Bloodworth to take control of the Conference.

Mr. BLOODWORTH thanked the Minister and the Government for calling the Conference together, and also thanked the delegates for having appointed him to the Chair.

He said that tremendous changes in industry had taken place in their lifetime, and were still taking place. Prominent industries thirty or forty years ago had been replaced by entirely new trades, and the problem of apprenticeship therefore required very careful consideration. He hoped that when the Conference had arrived at definite and useful recommendations, as he felt sure they would be able to do, the Government would view them sympathetically and favourably.

A motion to adjourn the Conference until 2.30 p.m., so that the workers' delegates could have an opportunity to meet and discuss the agenda paper, was lost.

The Conference then proceeded with the agenda paper.

Proposal 1 :—

- (a) That the chief purpose of technical schools is the training of apprentices for industry, supplementary to workshop training.
- (b) Whether the chief work of the day classes at schools should be the preparation of boys for industry before commencing employment.

Mr. W. McLEOD said that the matter was raised with a view to the improvement of the trade education of youths, such training having developed very little in New Zealand. It was desirable that the Conference should arrive at some definite recommendation to place before the Minister of Education. With regard to section (b) of the remit, he was of opinion that that should be struck out, so that the maximum amount of money would be available for the more important evening classes, and the training of those boys who were actually apprenticed. There was much difficulty in getting equipment and accommodation for boys attending night classes, and the numbers were increasing year by year.

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS instanced a similar difficulty in obtaining equipment for the teaching of the printing trade in Christchurch. It was his opinion that the Government should step in and make arrangements with some of the printing firms for the boys to get practical knowledge there.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL moved: That one of the chief purposes of technical schools is the training of apprentices for industry, supplementary to workshop training.

The DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION said that he valued the opportunity of meeting men closely associated with both industries and technical schools. So far as opinions had then been expressed he was very largely in agreement with what had been said. The technical schools should devote themselves mainly to the preparation of apprentices for industry, greater attention being paid to the theoretical side than to the practical; at the same time it was a very dangerous thing to differentiate theory from practice. The great problem was to know how far to go along the practical line. The Education Department did not wish to stint technical schools of equipment, but had to guard against equipping them too lavishly. Owing to the varied and scattered nature of secondary industries in New Zealand it was very difficult indeed to suitably equip technical schools. Probably the equipment in the technical schools had developed more along engineering than other lines, and though the opinion had been expressed that there was too much practice indulged in in the technical schools, he did not think so himself. At the same time he agreed that employers of apprentices had not the time to deal with the theory of their particular industry, and it was left mainly to the technical schools to do this. Though in his opinion the technical schools should deal mainly with theory, there should nevertheless be a sufficient amount of equipment to show the general application of the principles. With regard to the practice of establishing hobby classes in technical schools—more the case many years ago than now—he believed that we had quite enough to do to equip the technical schools for those who were earnestly intending their life's work to be in industry. Hobby classes should be self-supporting; at the same time, if there was room in the technical schools he did not think they should be excluded; a broad view must be taken of technical education.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL considered that theory should not be made predominant. Any one who knew anything about the painting trade would see that it was impossible to separate entirely the theoretical from the practical.

Mr. A. RICE said that if it was stated that theory must predominate it was practically a mandate to all Technical School Boards and Apprenticeship Committees to work on those particular lines. He thought they should leave it in a broad sense, and not make it mandatory to teach theory only, but to combine theory with practice—leave it to the discretion of the different committees in the particular centres to work on broad lines.

Mr. G. T. THURSTON moved, That the following words be added to the motion: "in order that such may be given to the best possible advantage, the Government and Education Department be urged to comply with the practical requests of Trade Committees established in each centre in conjunction with each trade." He did that because it was impossible to differentiate the theory from the practice—it was very hard to determine where to start and where to finish. They had Trade Committees in Christchurch working in conjunction with the Instructors at the Technical College; those Trade Committees made recommendations to the Board or to the Government in regard to the equipment required for each particular trade with which they were connected; therefore they were in absolute touch with the business.

Mr. H. BRADLEY was of the opinion that the management of technical schools should be left to those in charge. While they should make suggestions to them, he did not think a dictatorial suggestion on the lines of the amendment should be considered. As a suggestion it was quite all right. It was not always possible, and he thought they should not interfere with the management of the technical schools.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the whole thing would be a recommendation to the Government, not a mandate.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL submitted that it was only the trade classes that were going to be of any advantage to the working community in following their walk of life, and for that reason he thought there should be more support and more consideration given to the technical side of the general industry of the country.

The amendment was carried, the motion now reading: "That one of the chief purposes of technical schools is the training of apprentices for industry, supplementary to workshop training, and that in order that such may be given to the best possible advantage the Government and the Education Department be urged to comply with the practical requests of Trade Committees established in each centre in conjunction with each trade."

It was agreed that part (b) of the remit be struck out.

Proposal 2 : That the election of representatives of Apprenticeship Committees on the Technical School Advisory Board, Wellington, be made by committees by ballot, and the number be increased from two to four.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL thought it would be better if there was an election of representatives of those sent from the Apprenticeship Committees, to be made by committees by ballot. There was really nothing done on that Advisory Board ; he thought it went out of existence after a little while.

The DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION explained that the Advisory Board was set up, he thought, by Sir James Parr, and had done a great deal of useful work in preparing a syllabus of instruction in various technical subjects—a tremendous amount of useful work had been done by the Board ; such syllabuses had been sent around to the various technical schools. It was not a legally constituted Board. It was more or less a trial of the functions of such a Board, as it was felt by the Superintendent of Technical Education that technical advice was very badly needed by the Instructors from those who were actually engaged in industry. Consent was given to the Board being set up as an interim committee, although there was no Act or regulations saying that such Board should be set up. The Technical Schools' Association had been anxious to have that Board properly constituted, and the position was now that the original interim committee had gone out of existence and no Board had been appointed to take its place, nor was there any statutory authority whereby such could be constituted. He did not know the present Minister's views on the matter.

Mr. W. McLEOD said that the work of the Board in connection with the various syllabuses was found very impracticable. The work set down was out of date. It was not a practicable proposition. The associations were of opinion that the work should have been more practical and not based on some old customs. The Board was not now in existence, and he moved that it be reconstituted, and that the number of representatives be increased from two to four.

Mr. W. H. WINSOR asked whether this Board was set up as a result of the Conference of the Technical School Boards. It had never come up before any Apprenticeship Committee before.

The DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION said that he understood that it arose from the feeling on the part of the teachers that they desired advice of practical men : he was not sure—it was before his time.

Mr. H. BRADLEY did not think they should criticize the work of the Technical College Boards.

Mr. W. McLEOD thought that a Board should be appointed to control the syllabus and control examinations in the trades, and to issue certificates for all trades ; at present each technical school had its syllabus and issued the certificates. It would be better if it was made universal.

The DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION explained that the Department realized that the issue of certificates should be a Dominion matter. All public examinations up to that point had been in the hands of either the University or the Education Department. The matter concerned the Education Department more than the University, and technical examinations had been arranged by the Department in order that Dominion certificates might be issued. Whether it would be better for these certificates to be issued under the authority of a Board rather than the Department he was not prepared to say. He would suggest that there would be no harm in the Conference expressing an opinion as to whether or not that Board be revived.

Mr. A. C. MITCHELL asked what the present method of appointment to that Board was.

The SECRETARY OF LABOUR stated that he was a member of the preliminary Board, and the Apprenticeship Committees were not represented at that time. If they wanted the Minister of Education to set up the Board and select four representatives of the Apprenticeship Committees that he considered would most adequately represent the various trades concerned, perhaps a motion something like what they suggested might do.

The CHAIRMAN suggested that they could pass the motion in that form and let the Government wrestle with the method of selection.

After further discussion the motion was carried in the following form : " That the Technical Schools Advisory Board be reconstituted, and that the election of representatives of Apprenticeship Committees on that Board be made by committees by ballot, and that the number be increased from two to four."

Proposal 3 : Local Control : That the election of employers' and workers' representatives to local Technical School Boards be made by Apprenticeship Committees.

Mr. W. McLEOD said that the employers and workers' representation on Technical School Boards was limited according to regulations. He thought a strong representation from the Apprenticeship Committees would be of great benefit not only to the apprentices but also to the management of the technical schools, in order to ensure the practical side of technical education being made more useful and more helpful to the boys.

After further discussion the motion was lost.

Proposal 4 : That apprentices receive free technical-school training when attendance is compulsory, or employers to pay fees ; and if apprentice fails to attend 75 per cent. classes, employer to deduct fees from wages.

Mr. W. J. THOMAS said that he was not very much concerned as to who should pay, but he thought some provision should be made by the educational authorities to grant free places to any of those students who might not be qualified for free places.

Mr. W. McLEOD thought it was a step forward if they could bring this into force, and that it would do a great deal for the apprentices. In fact, it was a matter that was seriously retarding the work of the committees. At the present time the committees were expected to ask boys to go to the technical college, and if the lads failed to do so it was their duty as committeemen to take action

against the boys. But how could they take action against the boys when they had received serious complaints about the hardship of having to pay fees—so much so that in their hearts they could not feel that they should press it upon them at all.

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS thought this would be a step in the right direction, and possibly afterwards they might also abolish the cost of books.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL moved the following amendment: That apprentices receive free technical-school training where attendance is compulsory, or their employers to pay fees; and if the apprentice fails to attend 70 per cent. of the maximum attendance at the classes, the employers to be empowered to deduct the fees from the wages of the apprentice. He submitted that this would be fair to the apprentice and to the employer.

Mr. A. RICE considered that there was no obligation on the part of the employer to pay the fees of apprentices. The amendment meant that some provision would have to be made by the Government to provide free technical education.

Mr. A. C. MITCHELL was opposed to any suggestion that the employer should pay the fees. It should be the responsibility of the State and not of the employer. The reason for that was fairly obvious. Certain employers took a serious view of their responsibilities to their apprentices. They employed a reasonable number of apprentices, and went to great pains to train them adequately. Other employers would not accept any responsibility at all in the training of apprentices, but waited until these lads had completed their apprenticeship and then collected them in to work for them. The carrying of the resolution as suggested by the mover would unquestionably encourage the attitude of this latter class of employer: it would certainly not act as an incentive to increasing their responsibility of teaching apprentices. But in any event he did not think the employer should be empowered to deduct any fees from the boys' wages—that was a matter outside the employer's responsibility altogether.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL supported the proposal, and considered that it was the employers responsibility to pay the fees in every instance. This, however, was his personal opinion, not that of the committee to which he belonged.

Mr. E. R. B. HOLBEN contended that, in regard to the question of fees, they could not deny the fact that somebody had to pay, but it should be the masses, not the individual. The public got the advantage of education because, if they turned out better men through their technical schools, surely the public got the benefit of that training by a better class of work. If that were the case, surely it should be that the State should pay.

After further discussion the amendment was put to the Conference and lost.

The motion, "That apprentices receive free technical-school training," was carried unanimously.

The Chairman later asked the representative of the Education Department to express an opinion with respect to the question of free places.

Mr. W. S. AUSTIN, of the Education Department, referred to the resolutions that had been passed, "that apprentices receive free technical-school training," and "that in smaller towns apprentices be sent free to the nearest technical school." He had noticed during the discussion that no mention was made of the present Free Place Regulations, and it had occurred to him that possibly members of the Conference were not fully conversant with the regulations as they stood at present with regard to free education and free railway travelling or grants in connection with travelling. He was referring now particularly to those students who got their education on the lowest possible qualifications. For instance, junior free places were granted to pupils coming out from the primary schools who were over fourteen and had been attending a public school not more than six months before—that was to say, there had not been a longer period than six months since the time of leaving the primary school and their taking up junior free places. The junior free place referred to was the free place in connection with classes suitable for apprentices, part-time day and evening classes. If the boy had not decided to take up the free place within six months after leaving the primary school the Director of Education might extend that period, provided he was satisfied that the boy had had no opportunity of attending a suitable technical class or school in the meantime. That free place was open to the boy for a year, but if he did well the Director of Education might extend his period to another year and even to a third year. The conditions for holding that free place were that the boy should take up one technical subject together with a certain amount of study in English and arithmetic, because the Education Department considered that the boy's ordinary education should not cease if it were possible to carry it on after he had left the primary school. These were the only conditions, and with the English and arithmetic plus the technical subject he was required to do a minimum of sixty hours per year—that is, twenty hours for each subject. He might take more subjects if he wished. The only bar there was to a boy who had not the qualifications of proficiency but was merely fourteen years of age was that he could not take up commercial work. Having gone through with the junior free place, he was then entitled, if he had done well, to get a senior free place, and that was tenable for a further three years, or if boy showed special merit he might go on for another year. During that period of holding a senior free place he was required to take up two (or more if he wished) related subjects of technical instruction, and the subjects of English and arithmetic might be dropped. As before, a minimum of sixty hours in the year, and not less than twenty hours per year for any one subject, was required. In connection with railway fares, the regulations provided that apprentices might travel between their home and class at half rate of ordinary season tickets. While they were junior-free-place students up to the age of nineteen years attending technical schools they could travel free (second class) for a distance over three miles, so that it would be seen that a boy might, even under present conditions, receive free technical education, and he might also receive free railway travelling up to the age of nineteen years.

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.

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.

Proposal 12 : That record-cards showing the attendance, conduct, diligence, &c., of every apprentice throughout his career be kept by the Technical School Committees, and that the Apprenticeship Committees and others interested have access to these records at suitable times.

Mr. A. F. SANDFORD, in moving the adoption of the remit, stated that the Technical School Board already had all this knowledge at their finger-ends, and considered it would be a big help to the Apprenticeship Committees if they had that data before them at each meeting, so that they could follow intelligently the progress of each boy.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Proposal 13 : That, in view of the prohibitive expense of equipment for the instruction of apprentices in the printing trade, and the impossibility of establishing classes in all towns, the Taranaki Printing Trades Apprenticeship Committee suggests—

- (a) That one or more thoroughly equipped colleges for complete instruction in the printing trade be established, with competent lecturers and instructors :
- (b) That this college conduct correspondence instruction in each branch of the trade for all the apprentices in the industry :
- (c) That an annual instruction class for all apprentices be held at the college, when apprentices in each branch will attend a course of lectures and demonstrations :
- (d) That to provide the expense of the establishment and conduct of this college the Master Printers' Federation, the Paper Trades' Association, printing supply houses, and Printing Trades Employees' Union be asked to assist the Government.

Mr. G. FLEMING moved the adoption of the remit, explaining that some members of the committee had come to the conclusion that there were so few apprentices in New Plymouth that there was no chance at all of any of the boys getting any technical instruction worth talking about. Could not some body be set up whereby that instruction could be given ?

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS pointed out that at the present time they were competing, and competing successfully, against imported printing, but in order to safeguard the industry they must have sufficient technical instruction for their boys to meet the increasing technical knowledge that was going on outside. It would be almost impossible to establish enough equipment in any technical college to carry out all parts of the trade, and the only way they could meet the position was by establishing a central college or engaging some central printing-works.

The CHAIRMAN ruled that the remit was covered by the resolutions already passed dealing with the training of apprentices, correspondence classes, and the central examination for all trades, and it did not seem to him to be necessary to pass it again as regarded one particular trade. If the committee in New Plymouth liked to send a request to the Government, the Conference had already asked the Government by a resolution to give effect to it.

Proposal 14 : That on the representation of any Apprenticeship Committees in a trade the Minister may order that every apprentice in that trade shall undergo an examination upon the completion of his term of apprenticeship ; that if the candidate passes the examination he shall be granted a certificate entitling him to the words "Certificated" (stating trade) after his name ; that no other person shall be entitled to use those words.

Mr. R. CAIRNS said that he thought it advisable, on behalf of the boys, that something should be done in the direction of giving them a certificate—it would be an incentive for the apprentices to work. It had come now to the time when they considered they had to protect the crafts, and they thought that was the only reasonable way in which they could arrive at that position.

Mr. A. RICE said that the motor industry was one in which the utmost skill was necessary in order to give the best results. There were a lot of incompetent men working at the trade at the present time, who were not fit to carry out the work that they were called upon to do, with the result that not only did it mean trouble for the motor-vehicle, but the public were in danger even of death. He thought under those circumstances that it was necessary, in trades such as that, to have a certificated man who would carry the brand of competency wherever he went.

Mr. G. FLEMING, though not against the idea of granting certificates to apprentices, pointed out that if they passed the motion it was going to make a close corporation as far as employees were concerned, in that only those men who had managed to get the New Zealand certificate were going to be considered certificated journeymen. That he was satisfied would be detrimental.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that they had already carried a resolution agreeing to a standard examination.

Mr. W. H. WINSOR said that he liked the idea, but not just immediately a boy had got out of his time—that was too soon for him to be registered or certificated. If it were some years after, say five years, when he had had his chance to get experience with other men who had served their time, that would be all right, but otherwise he was afraid it would lose half its value.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Apprenticeship Act had been operating for four years, and they were now attempting to improve that Act, to make the apprentices more competent, and it seemed to him a necessary corollary to that Act that there should be some certificate, some advantage given to the boy who had gone through his period of apprenticeship, over another boy who worked in the same trade but who had not gone through that period of apprenticeship. They had boys in the building trades going through their period of apprenticeship and coming out of it proficient tradesmen, working alongside men who had not known a day's apprenticeship, and drawing equal pay. It

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.

The CHAIRMAN read subclause (5) of clause 4 of the Act, as follows: "Save in special cases authorized by the Minister, no fees or allowances shall be payable to members of a committee."

Mr. W. MADDISON drew attention to the expenses which the representatives were called upon to incur in attending the meetings, the committees having no means by which these expenses could be paid. He suggested that any out-of-pocket expenses be met.

Mr. W. H. WINSOR hoped they would continue to do the work more or less as a labour of love, and suggested that no attempt be made to pay members of committees for the work they were doing.

Mr. A. F. SANDFORD did not think that they should ask fees. They should do it in the interests of the boys. No doubt the employers would be quite prepared to pay expenses, but the employees were not in a position to do so. When they were away from their homes it was not only the train fare—in their case there was a night's lodging. He thought they should pass the second portion of the remit.

Mr. A. RICE said that they found it very difficult indeed to give proper supervision, for the simple reason they had not the facilities for the travelling which was necessary in order to make an inspection of the country districts and see that shops were properly equipped. Some parts of the country they could not reach. They were working in the interests of the country, and he thought that some method should be provided by which they could get around and do the supervision that was necessary to carry out the orders. That was all they asked. As actual members of the committee they were quite prepared to go along and do their bit to improve the conditions of the trade.

After further discussion the following motion was carried: That the Minister be requested to exercise the authority vested in him by clause 4 (5) of the Act to the extent of refunding members of committees' out-of-pocket expenses incurred by them in carrying out their duties under the Act.

Mr. W. MADDISON asked if out-of-pocket expenses would mean that an employer or worker would be paid for actual time he had lost.

The CHAIRMAN thought it would, but the interpretation would rest entirely with the Minister.

Proposal 16: That employers and workers, members of committees, should be limited to persons who are or have been actually engaged in the industry concerned.

Mr. E. R. B. HOLBEN considered that a representative of the technical school on the committee would be of great assistance, and moved: That the words "excepting any person that they ask to attend from the technical schools" be added to the remit.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL pointed out that quite a number of small unions were not able to send men to these Apprenticeship Committees, and sent their secretary along. The secretary was quite conversant with apprenticeship orders of several trades, and it would be an injustice to the small unions to cut them out.

The amendment was lost.

The following amendment was then carried without further discussion: That the employers and workers, members of committees, should comprise a majority of persons who have been actually engaged in the industry concerned.

Proposal 17: That representatives of Apprenticeship Committees be added to Technical School Boards.

A delegate expressed the opinion that they did not want to do away with the ordinary representation, but, as quite a big amount of the work of technical schools was in connection with apprentices, he thought there should be a representative of the Apprenticeship Committee in addition to look after the interests of the night classes.

Mr. J. PATTERSON thought it was a question for the employers and unions connected with different apprentices to see that practical men represented them on the Technical College Boards.

Several delegates pointed out that employers and workers' organizations were already represented upon Technical School Boards.

The CHAIRMAN thought that a direct representation would be of great advantage in the trades.

The motion in the following form—"That representatives of combined Apprenticeship Committees be added to Technical School Boards"—was carried on the casting-vote of the Chairman.

Proposal 18: That the committees or the District Registrar, as the case may be, be empowered to allot apprentices to any employer willing and able to teach them, without having regard to the individual quota specified in the apprenticeship order.

Mr. G. MILLS-PALMER, in moving the motion, said that they had a distinct duty to perform to those boys who were not already engaged in industry but desired to be in the future; but in performing this duty they were up against two difficulties: first, they had the reluctance of certain employers to teach apprentices—it was immaterial for what reason; and, secondly, they had a movement of those already in the trade to do nothing which might materially affect the position of the craftsmen. They had to reconcile these difficulties and their duty to find employment for the boys as they came on. Every boy should have an opportunity to learn a trade; if they did not give him this they were going to send him to the ranks of unskilled labour, and it was these men who became a burden on the people. He thought they should do their duty by helping to provide for boys who wanted employment.

Mr. W. H. WINSOR considered that they had a right to protect the interest of the boys and girls and help them in every way possible. At the present time the chances of youths securing employment were limited—very gravely limited indeed. Personally, he held that every youth had a right to be taught something in some direction in any industry, profession, commerce, or anything else. At the present moment the men who had been employed on "dead-end" jobs had no chance; the men who had monopolized the good jobs were the tradesmen. The apprenticeship orders were wrapped around

with too many conditions, such as quota of apprentices, for instance. He did hope that they would consider the children; they did not want them to drift into "dead-end" jobs; they should be given their opportunity the same as they, the delegates, had had.

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS pointed out that many tradesmen were out of employment, and he was quite sure that if the motion were carried it would mean that many more boys would be put to the trades and more journeymen would be thrown out of employment, and unemployment would be more acute. If they wanted to train tradesmen they ought to be able to have some security of employment instead of training them up to go somewhere else.

Mr. E. R. B. HOLBEN did not think there was any likelihood of the trade or the apprentices being abused, because there was always a number unwilling to go to a trade because of the wages being small to start with. If they could teach a boy a trade, let him have it by all means; he would be a better citizen. There had always been hewers of wood and drawers of water, and always would be.

Mr. H. BRADLEY considered that everybody had a right to go to the occupation that he most desired and in which he was most likely to be successful. If they were going to debar boys from going to an occupation he maintained they would be doing an absolute injustice. The country would in any case have to deal with eleven thousand boys each year, and the number was increasing year by year. It was far better for boys to receive a trade than to be put into "dead-end" occupations. The unskilled were finding more difficulty in regard to unemployment than the skilled. The Government should see that every skilled artisan was given sufficient work. It was an absolutely suicidal policy for the Government to allow tradesmen to be idle while allowing goods to be imported into the country the production of which was the legitimate job of these unemployed men. They wanted to give every boy a trade—to allow him to learn the trade he thought he was cut out for, and see that their industries and their trades were not penalized by the importation of goods from foreign countries where a lower rate of wages pertained.

The CHAIRMAN said that they should all realize that this question was the crux of the whole matter. It was a matter which the country expected the Conference to consider, and to come to some decision about which was worthy of consideration by the Government. It was not correct to say there were eleven thousand boys leaving primary schools each year: the actual number was twenty-five thousand per annum, boys and girls, leaving the primary and secondary schools. It was no good saying they had only to consider the boys, because they all knew that girls played an important part in industry. The problem in this country, and every other in the world, is what to do with the boys and girls. His own opinion—not that of his organization—was that every boy and girl should have the right to learn some trade. He differed from the mover of the motion in that he thought that apprenticeship must be regarded as part of education, part of the work of training oneself for life. He differed also in the matter of employers being allowed to have an unlimited number of apprentices. Apprenticeship should be the whole function of the State, and the training of apprentices should be taken out of the hands of private employers and should become part of the functions of the State—part of education. It was obvious that apprentices could not teach apprentices—they must have a sufficient number of trained men to guide the apprentices in learning their trade—and if the resolution were carried in its present form some employers would have their works staffed with apprentices, and it would be impossible for the apprentices to get the proper grounding in trade. It would also mean that if they gave that power to District Registrars or committees it would be impossible for Registrars or committees to adjudicate fairly as between employer and employer. New Zealand had reached the stage where provision would have to be made for its own children. They did depend on the immigration of skilled men when the country could not produce them. That, however, had changed. They had now to provide for their own boys and girls, but not to stop immigration entirely. Unless there were a very radical change in New Zealand methods New Zealand workers could not possibly be employed to the full. It was their duty to carefully consider the matter and to see if they could arrive at some suggestion which would meet with the favourable consideration of the Government and would be acceptable to the people as a whole. It was not only a question which concerned them, and a very considerable section of the community, but it was concerning every country in the world, and what the ultimate solution would be was not for him to say. He was in agreement with the principle underlying the resolution, but not with the methods suggested for carrying it out.

Mr. E. R. B. HOLBEN said that if the resolution were not carried it might be advisable to consider the question of curtailing the number of boys and girls entering the technical schools. They technically educated these boys, encouraged them to take up trades, and then said they should not learn a trade.

Mr. A. C. MITCHELL said that he was in favour of the principle of the resolution but not in favour of the method of application. He did not favour the suggestion which had been made that the Government should be the training authority for the apprentices, as the scheme was not capable of general application—it was not feasible. He thought it was right that a boy should be able to take up the trade that he thought he was fitted for and for which his primary training had to some extent qualified him, but he was not certain that it would be wise to lift the bar and have an unlimited number of apprentices. The position was one fraught with much danger; it was not a problem easy of solution, but it was for the Conference to give a lead in the matter. The whole purpose of the 1923 Apprentices Act was to find a better means to absorb more of the young people in the industries and to give them a better training. That that Act did not achieve its purpose was admitted. If this Conference could find a solution to the problem it would have undoubtedly justified its existence.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL said that prior to the Act coming into operation there was a great shortage of apprentices. He thought to-day there were about ten or eleven thousand apprentices registered under the Apprentices Act, and ventured to say that there was not one-third of that number under the old system. There was one apprentice to every three journeymen, roughly speaking. He mentioned

that because it was proof that the Act had been successful in this respect. More boys were coming to the trades than before. On the educational authorities' estimate there were about twelve thousand children leaving school for work. They were at a loss to know what they were going to do about this situation. He called attention to a proposal made by Mr. Davis, Secretary of Labour in the United States, in regard to the question of unemployment in the United States, that employers should seriously consider the question of reducing the number of hours of all workers. He thought that a most important question was involved if this motion were carried. This proposal was going to accentuate the unemployment position in a very short period, and if it were carried he wanted to make it quite clear that the representations of the minority would also have to be placed before Government. They could not allow this recommendation to go, if carried, as a recommendation from the Conference to the Government to act upon it. It was not going to do industry any good; it was going to bring in cheap labour, keener competition, and reduce the standard of living for all concerned.

Mr. H. N. SCROGGS pointed out that in all trades they must have not necessarily more workmen but a higher standard of work from the workmen. To make a tradesman of any boy that came along who desired to be in a trade increased the number of tradesmen, but it did not say that their quality was improved in any way. Better work was what they wanted, and they could not get that by having too many apprentices in one trade.

Mr. W. MADDISON said that the resolution proposed to place the quota entirely in the hands of the boys, and allow boys to say, in effect at any rate, as to how many should go into the trade. He realized the nation was up against a very big problem in the question of what to do with the boys, but the workers had first of all to see that their livelihood was fully protected from any influx of boys beyond what was in the natural order of things. Also, it was a necessity and a duty for them, especially those of them who were on Apprenticeship Committees, to protect the boys that were passing through their hands as apprentices, and to see when they came out of their time that there was a job waiting for them. This became a solid question for them to consider. What, in the first place, was the guarantee for employment of the men already in the trade? If they could not give a guarantee to the men they had already in employment, or to those ready to take up employment, what guarantee were they able to give to the boys they were apprenticing to-day under the present quota? They were proposing by this remit largely to increase the number of boys going into the various trades, and that meant it was going to swell the trades, and put not only a large number of men out of employment ultimately, but the boys themselves as they came to maturity in the trade would also be amongst the unemployed. He had information from the Statistician's Department to the effect that at that time there were eleven thousand five hundred boys coming out of school each year. The trades could absorb something like three thousand per annum, more or less, worked out on a basis of the existing quotas, and that, worked out again on the proportion of one to three, meant that one to three was capable of creating 37·4 of an increase in the number of tradesmen in ten years. If the rate of increase were not greater during the next few years than during the past eighteen years, the existing proportion of apprentices of one to three would mean that they would have a far greater number of men in the trades than they would be able to find employment for.

Mr. W. R. HAYWARD contended that there was no one there prepared to deny the right of a boy to learn the trade that he wished to adopt. He had not heard any one yet who was prepared to take that attitude. He thought there was too much pessimism regarding future employment, and also too much stress made on the total number of boys coming out of school wanting to learn trades. If the proposal were carried he did not think employers would overburden themselves with apprentices, as the employment of apprentices was absolutely unprofitable. In countries where there was no quota and no restriction on employment of apprentices they had a sufficient supply of unskilled labour, they had a sufficient supply of skilled labour, they had not any more acute problem of unemployment than we had here; and he did not think this was going to operate in the way many people seemed to think it would. They would not increase unemployment unless they increased the number of people in the Dominion without increasing employment. If a boy were trained or had served his time to a trade and he could not find employment in that trade, he was no worse off than if he had not been trained at all; in fact, he was very much better off, because he had learned to use his hands with skill and to use his brain constructively.

Mr. A. RICE was of the opinion that the employment of apprentices should be so restricted as merely to provide for the number of journeymen that any particular trade could absorb. If they were going to overcrowd a trade they would have a surplus of labour. The economic conditions would force men perhaps into accepting worse conditions than they were already enjoying, and the whole of the status of employment of the industrial worker would be practically thrown to the ground.

Mr. S. E. WRIGHT said that he had for several years advocated the right of boys to learn a trade if they wished. The question of unemployment did not come into this at all, because in any case there would be unemployment if the conditions of the country were not prosperous. Presumably the man who had been trained and was unemployed had a better chance of obtaining employment than the unskilled worker. The main fact was that they could not take away from the boys their inherent right to fit themselves for the battle of life as they best could, by learning a trade. They had a better chance of making use of a boy if he was trained than if he was untrained.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL was of the opinion that the Conference was not competent to deal with the question. He did not think they should come to a conclusion on the matter at all—it was far too big for them to solve in a few days. He was of opinion Government should set up a Royal Commission to go into the whole problem of the quotas and what they were going to do with the boys who were offering. He certainly would not like to take the responsibility of putting on paper something that the Government could take as a recommendation on a question such as this, and did not think it should go to the vote at all.

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.

Proposal 26 : That, on the question of reaching a decision where committee is equally divided, decision be left to the Court, and each side may submit a case in writing through the Registrar.

This was carried after a brief discussion.

Proposal 27 : That a departmental officer be appointed to supervise the welfare of apprentices.

After some discussion the motion was lost.

Proposal 28 : That the Conference has no recommendation to submit with respect to proportion ; and that individual trades be requested to forward their own recommendations to the Minister.

Carried unanimously after a brief discussion.

On motion of Mr. M. BROWN, seconded by Mr. A. FLETCHER, Mr. A. C. Mitchell was unanimously elected to the chair as successor to Mr. T. Bloodworth, who intimated that he had to return to Auckland on Wednesday night.

It was decided that the whole report be forwarded to the Minister, leaving any explanation to the Secretary of Labour.

A vote of thanks to Mr. T. Bloodworth, retiring Chairman, was carried with acclamation.

(Mr. A. C. MITCHELL, Wellington, presiding.)

Proposal 29 : That in every case where an apprentice is employed to whom an apprenticeship order applies, a printed or typewritten copy of the order shall be kept affixed in some conspicuous place where it may be easily read by the apprentice ; that the Inspector may at any time require the copy of the order to be moved to some other place, or that an additional copy shall be affixed in a place indicated by him.

After a short discussion, the motion "that the order be treated in this respect in the same manners as an Arbitration Court award" was carried.

Proposal 30 : That proceedings may be taken for failure to register a contract of apprenticeship at any time during the employment of the apprentice or within six months thereafter.

Carried after a brief discussion.

Proposal 31 : That the following clause be inserted in the Apprentices Act : "The Registrar or Apprenticeship Committee, may, in any matter arising in or out of the performance of their duties, state a case for the advice and opinion of the Court."

Carried after a short discussion.

Proposal 32 : That section 5 (4) (k) of the Apprentices Act, 1923, be amended to enable the committee to delegate to one or more members the powers conferred by this subsection.

Carried after a short discussion.

Proposal 33 : That section 10 of the Apprentices Act, 1923 (which provides that two or more employers in an industry may enter into a contract of apprenticeship with the same apprentice) be deleted.

Mr. W. WILMOT stated that the division of responsibility between different employers was not conducive to the boy learning his trade thoroughly.

Mr. W. MADDISON considered that if an individual employer could not, as required by the Act, give a guarantee that he was able to carry out the contract that he had entered into, then it was not in the interests of the boys or in the interests of the trade generally that he should be given the right to take an apprentice.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL thought it would be unwise to agree to delete this clause, mainly on behalf of the boys in the country districts, where there are many small employers.

Mr. H. BRADLEY said that it seemed most ridiculous to expect an apprentice to serve two masters. If he were a joint apprentice between two employers, it seemed to him there would be no definite responsibility on the part of any employer ; and if an employer were not in a position to employ an apprentice full time, he should progress before he put an apprentice on, or should not be allowed to employ an apprentice at all.

After a little further discussion the motion was carried.

Proposal 34 : That when an employer or firm for any reason terminates business, and any apprentices are discharged through such reason, and the discharged apprentices are unable to obtain a transfer to another employer, then in such cases no further apprentices shall be employed in the industry in the locality concerned until such discharged apprentices have been reinstated with other employers.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL said that there were some employers who would not take a boy who had had part of a training with another employer. They liked to get boys, to mould them to their own minds. It would be of great advantage if a section were put in the Act to prohibit the taking-on of any new boys until these other boys were absorbed.

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

were prepared to register the contract, and he did not think it desirable that an employer should have to go hat in hand to a committee to ask them to consider whether he might take on an apprentice or not.

Mr. H. BRADLEY did not think any stumbling-block should be put in the way either of a boy getting a job with reasonable despatch or of the employer making an arrangement if he desired to put an apprentice on who was a suitable boy.

Mr. J. W. ROBERTS pointed out that a meeting could be called at any time, therefore there was no need to wait for a month. They wanted to deal with the employers who were lax, because they were a menace to the trade. If this were carried it was going to do no harm to either side.

Mr. A. J. BALL said that this was a fairly wide question, and to require notification before taking on an apprentice would in many cases be a hardship. Would it not do to make it during the boy's probationary period? It would then give the employer and the committee time to consider the position.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL did not think there was any one committee that would go back on it. They all found it one of the finest amendments to the apprenticeship orders that they had ever had. There was really no hardship attaching to it at all. Where an application was received two or three days after the Apprenticeship Committee meeting, the committee generally made provision for the chairman and secretary to fix it up. If he were a *bona fide* employer there would be no difficulty whatever. It was really aimed at those people coming into the trade at a moment's notice.

The SECRETARY OF LABOUR explained that under section 8 an employer could take an apprentice on and then he must register the apprentice, making application to the Registrar within fourteen days. The Registrar could, of course, refuse to register, in which case the boy would have to go off.

Mr. S. E. WRIGHT moved as an amendment the deletion of the last words, "and shall not employ such apprentice without first obtaining such permission"; the motion to read, "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."

This was carried without further discussion.

Proposal 37: That should any member of an Apprenticeship Committee fail to attend three consecutive meetings without reasonable excuse or leave of absence his seat shall be declared vacant by the chairman, and the vacancy shall be filled by the organization concerned within thirty-one days. If the organization fails to appoint a representative within the period mentioned above, the District Registrar shall appoint some one to fill the vacancy.

The motion was carried without discussion.

Proposal 38: That in the case of apprentices in the fourth and fifth years of their apprenticeship who come under the various apprenticeship orders, they be allowed to sit for the intermediate or final examination, according to their tenure of apprenticeship under the said orders, and if they obtain a pass they be exempt from further attendance at technical classes.

Carried without discussion.

Proposal 39: That apprenticeship orders shall not be amended in any industrial district by the recommendation of any committee unless the committee in the centre where the majority of workers and employers are affected is first consulted.

Carried after a brief discussion.

Proposal 40: That when an application for permission to employ apprentices is under consideration the District Registrar shall place before the committee a statement showing the number of men employed by the employer concerned, for two-thirds full time during the past six months.

Carried after a brief discussion.

Proposal 41: That the form of apprenticeship contracts be so amended that companies will not be required to sign under seal.

Mr. G. MILLS-PALMER explained that this was merely an attempt to simplify the somewhat complicated arrangement which had been made for signing the contract to engage apprentices. Under the present Act the contract was in the form of a deed. The form of deed was an anachronism, and cumbersome—it was unsuitable for present conditions, and the complication attending the execution of deeds by the companies was out of all proportion to the importance of the occasion. It was necessary to call a meeting of directors, make an entry in the minutes of the directors' meeting, authorize the issue of the deed, which had to be stamped with the company's seal and signed by probably two directors and the secretary, whereas the whole thing could be done in a much more simple form.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL did not think there would be much objection so long as they had the assurance that it was not going to affect the validity of the apprenticeship.

After a little further discussion the motion was carried.

Proposal 42: That cases of misdemeanour by an apprentice should be dealt with by the District Registrar on the recommendation of the Apprenticeship Committee, with authority to endorse apprenticeship certificate.

Carried.

Proposal 43: That provision be made for the discharge of liability under an apprenticeship contract by employer ceasing to carry on business. (Suggested that where other employment cannot be found, three months' wages should constitute full discharge.)

Mr. G. MILLS-PALMER said that they would see it was clearly necessary that some definite provision should be made for the discharge of liability of employers under certain circumstances, and at any rate compensation to the apprentices concerned. At present if an employer became bankrupt the apprentice had no call on the employer's estate beyond the time he had actually worked, and had no real means of getting that. He thought that where it was impossible to obtain employment for him there should be some means of limiting that indebtedness, by means, say, of three months' payment of wages to the apprentice.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL said that even if the employer did go out of business it was his responsibility to the apprentice to see that he was placed in some other firm or establishment; and he was not going to support a proposal for the payment of three months' wages which would relieve him of his liability in connection with this matter.

Mr. S. E. WRIGHT said that he believed the Bankruptcy Act actually cancelled all contracts of apprenticeship, and also applied to any liquidation of a company; and this clause in those cases would give the boy a claim on the estate for three months' wages which he had not got to-day.

Mr. W. MADDISON thought the payment of the three months' wages practically relieved them of any of the objections which had been raised against this, because if there were any possibility of such a claim being made against a man, and he had to pay the three months' wages, then that was an incentive to him to try and place that boy. He looked on that as being a safeguard.

Mr. H. CAMPBELL considered that it was a very bad principle to establish in contracts, and it was going to react very severely on a number of boys.

The motion was lost.

The following proposal, emanating from the combined workers' representatives of Wellington Apprenticeship Committees, was introduced by Mr. F. D. Cornwell, and the Conference agreed to admit it:—

Proposal 44: That no person shall be employed who has not come within the provisions of the Apprentices Act, as an apprentice to work at any trade, and by being employed defeating the purposes of the Act. The employment of such a person to be deemed a breach of the provisions of the Act.

Mr. F. D. CORNWELL said that they did not want to endeavour to form a close corporation. They were looking not so much to themselves but to the uplift of the trades, which had to a very large extent deteriorated; also, machinery had, of course, played havoc with the old handcraft. What they were endeavouring to do was to conserve the trades for the boys—they would be the only ones who would be allowed to work in these trades or industries.

Mr. W. MADDISON said that they had felt, masters and men, that there was a necessity for some qualification clause as regarded what constituted a tradesman. The Society of Carpenters and Joiners had a pretty drastic definition of what constituted a tradesman, and if they could have kept that definition before them steadily all the way through they would have found the building trade in a very different position from what it was in to-day. Most of the builders, if not all of them, would endorse what he said, that there were a large number of men in their trade who were coming in, taking up the tools, and going through motions of doing the work, but he was sorry to say the work was not done. He knew they were asking for rather much, and he doubted if they should get further that day than perhaps the introduction of the topic; but it was essential, and must ultimately come, that they should have some definition of what constituted a tradesman, and by that means be able to eliminate these rough hands that were always coming in, and so protect the trade for those boys who were now coming out of their apprenticeship. He thought that if they were to have any form of registration, equity demanded that the only start that they could make was by allowing all those at present engaged in the trade to continue to follow that occupation, but that any others coming in could only come in by means of indenture.

Mr. W. H. WINSOR said that he was not prepared to vote on it at present: he would like to go back to the different organizations and consider it, and would suggest that they adopt that course.

Mr. A. RICE said that they had a considerable number of complaints from the motor-proprietors at the present time. Quite a number of men got an inkling of motor-car repairs—some of them had been drivers of cars—they did a little bit of tinkering, they became fairly conversant with one or two affairs on the car, and they hired themselves out and got into positions in motor-garages and called themselves motor mechanics. He had the absolute backing of the motor-garage proprietors to prevent this sort of workman getting in. He thought the motor industry was a very important industry, and one that should be protected in that direction; and the only way in which they could protect it was to place some restriction upon the qualifications of anybody who wished to engage in that particular trade.

Mr. G. MILLS-PALMER thought it was too great a proposal for this Conference to deal with. He would like to support the proposal that the question be submitted to all the Apprenticeship Committees.

The CHAIRMAN thought the thanks of the Conference were due to Mr. Cornwell for having the matter ventilated. He would suggest that it be withdrawn from further discussion, and that the Department be asked to circulate the remit to the various committees throughout the Dominion for further consideration. It was a remit in which it was impossible to reach finality that day. It embodied very important principles.

The Conference agreed to the Chairman's suggestion.

Proposal 45.

The Secretary of Labour read a letter from the New Zealand Federated Builders' and Contractors' Industrial Association of Employers, which had been received by the Minister and minuted to him to put before the Conference for consideration. The letter conveyed the following resolution passed at the last annual conference of the Federation held recently: "That this Federation of master builders desires the abolition of the Apprentices Act and the reversion to the apprentices clauses under the old awards which were in operation prior to the Apprentices Act coming into force."

Mr. W. H. WINSOR said that in the opinion of the master builders of the Dominion, which industry was the second in the land, the Apprentices Act had not in any shape or form done one jot or tittle to improve the training of apprentices since it had been brought into force. Not one single thing could they point out in which the apprentices had been improved as regarded their training as craftsmen. They had been faced with the work of administering this Act, and there was no use or good arisen from it. He therefore formally moved: That in our opinion the Minister of Labour should see that the Apprentices Act is repealed.

Mr. W. MADDISON moved, as an amendment: That the letter be laid upon the table and formally acknowledged.

The amendment was carried, Mr. WINSOR expressing the hope that his vote would be recorded against it.

Proposal 46: That in the opinion of the employers the unjustifiable practice of compelling an employer to pay apprentices for time spent in attending military training-camps when the apprentice is already being paid by the Defence Department should be abolished; and employers should not be compelled to pay apprentices for time not worked through any cause over which the employer has no control.

Mr. F. CORNWELL's amendment, "That this Conference recommend to the Minister the abolition of the compulsory military service Act," was not accepted by the Chairman.

After some discussion the Conference approved of the Chairman's suggestion that the matter be circulated to the various organizations throughout the Dominion for an expression of opinion.

Proposal 47: That the Minister of Education be asked to include four members of Apprentices Committees on the Technical Schools' Advisory Committee, two from the North and two from the South Island.

Carried after a short discussion.

Hon. W. A. VEITCH (Minister of Labour), in closing the Conference, said that he had only a very few words to say to them at that juncture, and they would be of more or less a complimentary character. They would understand that, in connection with every feature of the agenda paper—indeed, all the business that had been referred to the Conference—the Government had not desired to impress anything upon the Conference, but to give it the freest possible scope for thought, consideration, and expression of opinion, in order that the Government might get the benefit of the experience of the delegates in the administration of the Apprentices Act. He had read with a great deal of interest the discussions that had taken place. As far as he could judge of them they were of the character that one would expect from an ordinary community of British subjects—every man spoke his opinion very freely and very fully, and very definitely; they had fought the matter out, and had come to their conclusions, and he sincerely believed they were better friends at the end of the Conference than they were at the beginning, although they had each in their own way expressed definite and conflicting opinions. The conclusions that had been arrived at by the Conference had of course been recorded by the Secretary of the Labour Department, who would have their decisions and recommendations and conclusions put into manuscript form, and placed upon his table in due course. He, the Minister, would certainly go through them with very great care; he would consider every item passed on to him in the light of a decision by a body of men who had a wide experience in the administration of apprenticeship matters. He regarded the apprenticeship problem as one of great importance and intense interest to the people of New Zealand at the present time. They had to find, as far as they could, avenues of employment for their young men. He sincerely believed that as the years went by there would be an increasing demand for skilled artisans. He was quite convinced that the weakest feature of their educational system was the fact that it did not provide as much as it might be expected to provide in the direction that he had indicated. However, all of the features of their decisions would be carefully considered by him as having come from a body of responsible men, who had made their decisions not from a sectional point of view but with the full belief and consciousness of their responsibilities in making these recommendations for the general good of the public of New Zealand. On behalf of the Government, and himself particularly as Minister of Labour, he thanked the delegates very cordially for the services they had rendered, for the careful consideration they had given to the business of the Conference, and for the fact that they had sufficient interest and sense of responsibility to their country to come there, at some personal inconvenience and expense, to serve the people as members of the Conference. He would further like to express his appreciation of the fact that a considerable amount of restraint and good will must have been exercised by all, otherwise the business of the Conference, he was sure, would have lasted a great deal longer.

The Conference concluded at 4 p.m. on Thursday, the 9th May, with votes of thanks to the Minister and the Chair.

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