

There were eighteen prosecutions during the year for various breaches of the Act and the orders made thereunder, convictions being entered in sixteen of the cases, and penalties amounting to £24 16s. 8d. being imposed. With three exceptions the prosecutions were against employers.

The following table gives the approximate number of apprentices in the trades to which the Act applies. This information is based mainly on contracts of apprenticeship as registered with the Department.

RETURN SHOWING NUMBER OF APPRENTICES EMPLOYED IN SKILLED TRADES, APRIL, 1938.

(The figures for the previous year are shown in parentheses.)

Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.	Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.	Trade.	Number of Apprentices employed.
Baking	243 (213)	Electrical ..	577 (381)	Photo-engraving	33 (9)
Boatbuilding ..	35 (22)	Electroplating ..	4 (2)	Plumbing ..	418 (299)
Boilermaking ..	31 (26)	Engineering ..	1,006 (581)	Plastering ..	102 (62)
Bootmaking ..	253 (202)	Motor engineering	1,188 (668)	Printing ..	690 (556)
Boot-repairing ..	30 (28)	Furniture ..	674 (478)	Saddlery ..	47 (35)
Blacksmithing ..	17 (17)	Gardening ..	7 (13)	Sail and tent ..	4 (2)
Bricklaying ..	33 (22)	Hairdressing ..	126 (96)	Signwriting ..	3 (1)
Carpentering ..	1,028 (604)	Jewellery ..	47 (25)	Tailoring ..	26 (19)
Clothing ..	215 (158)	Leadlight ..	19 (13)	Tinsmithing ..	193 (120)
Coachbuilding ..	433 (285)	Masonry ..	12 (14)	Wicker-working..	18 (11)
Coopering ..	6 (5)	Moulding ..	93 (73)		
Curriers ..	1 (1)	Painting ..	271 (168)	Totals ..	7,916 (5,231)
Cycle-working ..	25 (24)				

The following table shows the number of apprentices employed in each year since 1928 :—

April,	Number of Apprentices.	April,	Number of Apprentices.
1928	10,227	1934	4,303
1929	9,943	1935	3,329
1930	9,826	1936	3,552
1931	8,901	1937	5,231
1932	6,910	1938	7,916
1933	5,594		

As mentioned in last year's report, the Department's records indicate that in normal times there are approximately 10,000 registered apprentices employed, which, viewed in another way, means that normally 2,000 fully trained apprentices enter the ranks of the skilled tradesmen every year. The estimated number of apprentices that may be employed without exceeding the proportion allowed under the various orders of the Court is 14,370. A reluctance on the part of employers to take on apprentices was evident from 1931 onwards, and it is of considerable interest, therefore, to note that in 1937–38 there were 3,235 contracts registered, as compared with 2,328 in 1936–37, while the number of apprentices employed increased from 5,231 to 7,916.

Attention was also drawn to the provisions of section 7 of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1936, under which the Minister of Labour is empowered to approve of special contracts of apprenticeship in the case of youths of eighteen years of age and over. Five hundred and twelve contracts have been registered in terms of this legislation.

From the above it is apparent that there is still scope for greater employment of apprentices, particularly in the building industry, as will be seen from the following table, which shows the number of apprentices employed in various branches of that industry during each of the past five years as compared with the number employed in 1928 :—

APPRENTICES EMPLOYED IN VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE BUILDING INDUSTRY.

	1928.	1934.	1935.	1936.	1937.	1938.
Bricklayers	127	15	8	5	22	33
Carpenters	1,757	565	321	348	604	1,028
Painters	481	152	97	105	168	271
Plasterers	227	68	40	38	62	102
Plumbers	741	300	239	213	299	418

Attention may be drawn here to the fact that the subject of apprenticeship, also technical and vocational education, is set down for discussion at the twenty-fourth session of the International Labour Conference, *vide* page 13.