

The Farmers' Union has submitted the proposal to the Government, together with a number of suggestions for the training and assistance of selected boys to enable them to acquire their own farms. It might be pointed out that if any apprenticeships of boys to farming are entered into it will not be under the Apprentices Act, 1923 (under which the Court of Arbitration makes orders for the control of apprentices in the ordinary skilled trades), but under an Act passed specially for farm apprentices—viz., the Master and Apprentice Act, 1920.

APPRENTICES ACT, 1923.

In regard to the other main purpose of the Apprentices Act, 1923—viz., to ensure the training of apprentices in the skilled trades—it is provided as follows: Except in the case of females, the Act applies generally to all apprenticeships previously covered by awards and industrial agreements under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, but the Court of Arbitration may extend the Act to other cases. In one instance (chemistry) females have been included in the order covering the trade.

An Apprenticeship Committee may be formed in any industry or group of industries in any locality by agreement between any organizations of employers and workers. The accompanying list shows the industries in which committees have been set up, with the number of such committees; these represent twenty-eight industries; the number of committees increased during the year from 126 to 133.

Industries.	Number of Committees.	Industries.	Number of Committees.
Baking and pastrycooking ..	9	Letterpress, lithographing, and book-binding ..	7
Boilermaking	11	Masonry (stone and monumental) ..	2
Bootmaking	5	Motor engineering	10
Boot-repairing	1	Moulding	11
Bricklaying	3	Painting	12
Carpentering and joinery ..	14	Plastering	5
Chemistry (pharmaceutical) ..	1	Plumbing and gasfitting	14
Clothing trade	3	Saddlery	2
Coachbuilding	4	Tailoring	4
Electrical working	8	Tinsmithing	2
Engineering	14	Typographing	7
Furniture trades	8	Wicker-working	1
Gardening	1		
Hairdressing	4		
Jewellery and watchmaking ..	2	Total	168*
Leadlight and glass working ..	3		

* There are, however, only 133 committees, one committee acting in several instances for two or more allied industries.

During the year 1927-28 one committee (plumbing trade) was dissolved by order of the Court owing to disagreement between the workers' and employers' representatives; this disagreement arose chiefly on the question of the proportion of apprentices to journeymen; the parties formed a new committee. As above stated, the Act contemplates separate committees being formed in the respective industries in any particular localities in order that the members may, by being on the spot, readily keep in personal touch with the boys and their employers; accordingly most of the committees have been set up for either specified towns or districts; there are only a few unimportant industries in which no Apprenticeship Committees have been set up or orders of the Court made, such as those of coopers, horse-shoers, beamsmen, and curriers.

The Court is next required to make general orders fixing the wages, hours, and other conditions of employment of apprentices; also the periods of apprenticeship and the minimum (not the maximum) age at which an apprentice may commence. There are now 108 orders of the Court in force, five being made during the past year; most, if not all, of these have been agreed upon by the parties concerned.

Amongst the powers given to the Court of Arbitration under the principal Act is that of ordering any employer or employers to employ a minimum number of apprentices. This provision was suggested by several representative employers in New Zealand, who had expressed the view that, while most employers realize the necessity of providing a sufficient number of journeymen for the future, a number of others did not do so. The power given to the Court has so far not been used. Employers, on the whole, are already employing a fair proportion of apprentices (see table on p. 14). In this connection, section 21 of the Act provides that if the majority of employers in any industry in a locality is desirous of establishing an institution in which boys would receive technical instruction, the Court of Arbitration may order all the employers in the industry and locality to contribute towards the cost of such training. The first case of this kind arose in Auckland; it was felt there that the apprentices in the motor mechanics' industry (Vol. XXVA, p. 672) could not be thoroughly trained in ordinary garages. Similar orders have since been made in the tinsmithing and sheet-metal working (Vol. XXVA, p. 894), plumbing (Vol. XXVA, p. 1246), and painting trades (Vol. XXVII, p. 393).