

The following additional powers are given to the Court, which it has, pursuant to section 6, delegated to the respective Apprenticeship Committees :—

Section 5 (4) (k) : To visit and inquire at any place where apprentices are employed as to the progress of the apprentices. Four hundred and seventy such visits were made during the year. It is not expected, however, that this work, which is considered essential for the successful operation of the Act, can always be adequately carried out by committees, as it must generally be done during working-hours, and, moreover, a member of a committee does not care to criticize the work of a competitor : the Department has, therefore, continued its policy of making available the services of some of its experienced Inspectors for the purpose of assisting committees in this direction ; in pursuance of this arrangement 283 special inspections have been made by Inspectors during the year at the request of committees, in addition to which Inspectors themselves in the course of their ordinary inspection have made 4,623 inspections.

Section 5 (4) (b) : To cancel any contract of apprenticeship—for instance, where the committee is satisfied that the apprentice is not suited to the industry. Eighty-two contracts have been cancelled since the commencement of the Act in 1924—seventy-nine by committees, and three by order of the Court.

Section 5 (4) (c) : To prohibit an employer from employing an apprentice. This may be done, for example, on account of lack of facilities for instruction, or because the trade is not a suitable industry in which to train apprentices, or until an employer can show that he is sufficiently established in business to continue as an employer. In fifty-two cases (covering ten trades) employers have been prohibited by committees under this section from taking apprentices. In order to facilitate supervision by committees under this subsection, the Court has during the past two years, at the request of committees, made twenty-seven orders (covering eleven trades), requiring each employer to apply to a committee (where one has been set up in the locality) for permission to employ an apprentice.

Section 5 (4) (d) : To order the transfer of any apprentice to another employer who is willing to take him—for example, where the committee considers better or further training can thus be obtained. Eighteen such orders have been issued on account of the first employers' inability to teach.

Section 5 (4) (g) : To order the attendance of any apprentices at a technical school, either in their own time, or in their employer's time if sufficient facilities for complete training are not provided by the employer. Twenty-two committees, covering fifteen trades, have ordered all apprentices, and nine committees have ordered fifty-eight individual apprentices to attend technical schools in their own time. In five instances the Court also made orders that all apprentices should attend technical schools. Extra remuneration has been provided for in thirteen trades upon the boys obtaining certificates showing satisfactory progress made at the schools. As showing that the benefits to be derived from technical-school training are now becoming recognized in industry, it may be mentioned that in one apprenticeship order it is provided that if the apprentice passes the requisite examination before he commences his apprenticeship, the term of the apprenticeship shall be reduced to four years, and the apprentice shall commence at the second year's rate. In another case the apprenticeship order provides that an apprentice to house-wiring may on passing the examination and upon registration as a wireman terminate his contract on giving one month's notice. The Wellington Furniture Trades Union of Employers also recently urged upon its members the desirability of seeing that their apprentices regularly attend the technical-school classes for apprentices, and decided to obtain monthly progress reports from the tutors on the progress of the boys. A further recognition by employers and workers generally of the value of the training given in the skilled trades by the technical schools was shown at the Conference of Apprenticeship Committees, when resolutions were passed—That the chief purpose of the technical-school system should be the training of apprentices for industry, supplementary to workshop training ; that to this end a Technical Schools Advisory Board be established, to include four members of Apprenticeship Committees ; that representation be given to local Apprenticeship Committees on the Technical School Boards in the respective centres. No orders appear to have been made requiring employers to give time off to their apprentices to attend technical schools.

Section 5 (4) (h) : To order the examination of apprentices. Sixteen committees, covering fourteen trades, have ordered such examinations. Information has been received from the Education Department that the City and Guilds of London Institute examinations will not be held in New Zealand in the plumbing industry after 1929 ; and in the cabinetmaking, carpentering and joinery, electrical wiring, electrical fitting, and motor engineering industries, and in the engineering trades after 1930. The Education Department will itself conduct future examinations, which will be as difficult as the examinations conducted by the London Institute, and which should therefore have equal value and standing in this country.

Section 5 (4) (i) : To order that any increase in wages due to an apprentice may be withheld—for example, on account of negligence or carelessness of the apprentice. In five cases—furniture, painting, and engineering trades—the committees made such orders.

Section 6 (2) : The Act confers a right of appeal to the Court of Arbitration upon any party affected by the decision of a committee. There have been only ten such appeals since the Act came into force, in seven of which the decision of the Committee was upheld. Neither of the two cases dealt with last year calls for comment.

Section 8 requires that every apprenticeship to which the Act applies shall, if in order, be registered by the District Registrar of Apprentices. Returns obtained from employers of apprentices under the Act show that at the 1st April, 1924 (when the Act came into force), there were 6,901 apprentices employed, with 22,086 journeymen, an average of 1 apprentice to 3.2 journeymen. The numbers of