

RETURN SHOWING NUMBER OF APPRENTICES EMPLOYED IN SKILLED TRADES, APRIL, 1939.

(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 ..	271 (243)	Dentistry ..	8 (—)	Painting ..	325 (271)
Boatbuilding ..	46 (35)	Electrical ..	720 (577)	Photo-engraving ..	44 (33)
Boilermaking ..	40 (31)	Electroplating ..	5 (4)	Plastering ..	138 (102)
Bootmaking ..	259 (253)	Engineering ..	1,111 (1,006)	Plumbing ..	498 (418)
Boot-repairing ..	32 (30)	Motor engineering ..	1,351 (1,188)	Printing ..	743 (690)
Blacksmithing ..	19 (17)	Furniture ..	735 (674)	Saddlery ..	41 (47)
Bricklaying ..	41 (33)	Gardening ..	9 (7)	Sail and tent ..	8 (4)
Carpentering ..	1,449 (1,028)	Hairdressing ..	139 (126)	Tailoring ..	43 (26)
Clothing ..	214 (215)	Jewellery ..	57 (47)	Tinsmithing ..	207 (193)
Coachbuilding ..	495 (433)	Leadlight ..	30 (19)	Wicker-working ..	16 (18)
Coopering ..	6 (6)	Masonry ..	20 (12)		
Curriers ..	1 (1)	Moulding ..	107 (93)	Totals ..	9,251 (7,916)
Cycle-working ..	23 (25)				

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	1939	9,251

It is interesting to note that the number of apprentices employed has increased from 3,329 in 1935 to 9,251 in 1939, and is approaching the 10,000 mark, which, as indicated by the records of the Department, is the approximate number of apprentices employed in normal times. The number of new contracts registered for the years ended 31st March, 1936, 1937, 1938, and 1939, were as follows : 1,292 ; 2,328 ; 3,235 ; and 2,700.

However, there still appears to be a reluctance on the part of some employers to engage apprentices, and there is yet ample scope for the employment of a greater number without in any way exceeding the proportion allowed by the various Orders of the Court of Arbitration.

Steady progress has been made under section 7 of the Statutes Amendment Act, 1936, which was enacted especially to meet the case of those youths who missed their opportunity of learning a trade during the depression. This provision enables the Minister of Labour to approve of contracts of apprenticeship in respect of youths of eighteen years of age and over upon such terms and conditions as the Minister thinks reasonable and equitable. Up to the 20th July, 1939, 1,356 contracts had been approved by the Minister, and particulars of the principal trades concerned are as follow : Bricklaying, 28 ; carpentry and joinery, 623 ; coachworking, 56 ; electrical, 82 ; engineering, 90 ; motor engineering, 127 ; furniture, 54 ; painting and decorating, 86 ; plastering, 38.

In order to encourage apprenticeships in the carpentry and joinery and bricklaying trades a subsidy is offered to employers in respect of the employment of youths between eighteen and twenty-five years of age in these occupations. This scheme is still in operation, and 478 contracts have been approved in the carpentry and joinery trade and 21 in the bricklaying trade.

The following table shows the number of apprentices employed in the various branches of the building industry during each of the past six years as compared with the number employed in 1928 :—

APPRENTICES EMPLOYED IN VARIOUS BRANCHES OF THE BUILDING INDUSTRY AS AT APRIL,

	1928.	1934.	1935.	1936.	1937.	1938.	1939.
Bricklayers	127	15	8	5	22	33	41
Carpenters	1,757	505	321	348	604	1,028	1,449
Painters	481	152	97	105	168	271	325
Plasterers	227	68	40	38	62	102	138
Plumbers	741	300	239	213	299	418	498

ARREARS OF WAGES.

Amounts totalling £31,994 7s. 3d. (last year £36,044 2s.) were collected by the Department's officers on behalf of workers who had been underpaid the wages prescribed by awards and the various Acts, while further amounts of such arrears totalling £32,038 18s. 10d. (last year £38,613 10s. 2d.—owing to a mechanical error in the computing-machine this figure was shown as £8,613 10s. 2d. in last year's report) were paid by employers at the instance of the Inspectors directly to the workers concerned : Total, £64,033 6s. 1d. (last year £74,657 12s. 2d., incorrectly shown in last year's report as £44,657 12s. 2d.—see above explanation).