

**TERRITORY FOR THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT.
APPRENTICESHIP BOARD.**

MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE APPRENTICESHIP BOARD HELD AT
10.30a.m. on TUESDAY, 4th AUGUST, 1936, at CITY. F.C.T.

PRESENT: The Chairman, (Mr. C. S. Daley),
Messrs. F.J.R.Gibson, W. J. Perry, H. V. Styles, and A. E. Helson.

Minister's
Address to
the Board.

The Minister for the Interior (the Honourable T. Paterson, M.P.) attended the meeting and was introduced to members by the Chairman, who welcomed him on behalf of the Board as the Minister responsible for apprenticeship in the Federal Capital Territory, and expressed its appreciation of his action in attending the first meeting and speeding the Board on its way. The Board had much work to do and was aware that the Minister would be particularly interested in its recommendations and its work, which was directed towards the welfare of the youth of the Territory and their training as tradesmen.

The Minister assured the Board that he was pleased to be able to attend its inaugural meeting, that he fully realised how important its work would be, and that he desired to congratulate them on their appointments. The Board seemed to him to be well balanced, representative of all interested sections - governmental and private employing interests and governmental and private employed interests. Various Governments had considered the apprenticeship problem for some years, but the depression had necessitated the shelving of the undertaking. He was very glad that the present stage had been attained.

As the Board was well aware, there was a good deal of Governmental activity which would enable the absorption of some apprentices under indentures, but private enterprise also was most active, particularly in the building trades, which would also afford scope for the employment of apprentices. He was particularly glad that arrangements had been made which would enable trainee apprentices to be accorded the advantage of the system. This would enable employers who might otherwise be afraid to employ apprentices, because they could not see uninterrupted employment ahead for a period of years, to employ trainee apprentices who, under the terms of their engagement, secure continuity of training, although they might not remain during the whole of their apprenticeship with one employer. The time spent in the service of a series of employers would be recognised by the Board and accounted to them for righteousness.

The Minister then indicated the steady progress made in the Vocational Training Scheme which had been introduced some months previously. Members of the Board would possibly be more intimately acquainted with that progress than himself. He had been extremely pleased when he visited the classes just after their establishment to observe the keen interest taken in their work by the lads who were enrolled. The enrolments had increased from an initial 27 to 44, and he hoped this progress would continue. When one considered the future of Canberra, one realised what a substantial building programme, certainly extending over some years consequent upon the transfers of public servants which had yet to be effected, had to be accomplished. It seemed to him to be little short of a calamity that such a large number of people in Canberra were without regular employment, but incapable of sharing in the skilled work involved in the programme because they lacked technical skill. He looked to the Vocational Training Scheme and, later, the effect of the Apprenticeship Scheme, to prevent an increase in the numbers of unskilled unemployed in the Federal Capital City. Even though it might not be possible to make the unskilled men skilled men, he hoped that youths might be trained to participate in the building programme. It would be better for the Government, as well as for the employees, if it were unnecessary to endeavour to undertake projects for unskilled men, a condition which had obtained to some extent for some years.

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Mr. Paterson added that he regarded the Board's task as one which was well worth doing. Its thorough performance would make a tremendous difference to the lives of boys leaving school, would be a means of checking the growth of the army of unemployed and would react beneficially in every way in the community. The matter was of course one for the Board to consider, but he desired to state that he thought the technical education available in Canberra must be of considerable assistance, not only to the apprentices, but to the employers. He wished the Board unqualified success in its work.

Chairman's reply
on behalf of
the Board.

On behalf of the Board the Chairman expressed appreciation of the encouragement offered by the Minister. The Board felt that not only would the result of its work benefit Canberra, but would gradually create tradesmen whose work would contribute to the development of Australia elsewhere. Men did migrate; it was a healthy characteristic of human nature. The number of unskilled men in Canberra had been rather a source of anxiety to those who had to deal with the problem. Apart from the requirements of local industry in 1936, other activities, such as small manufacturing concerns, might come to Canberra, which would further assist in absorbing men into partly skilled occupations which would not entail a lengthy period of apprenticeship.

The Minister then withdrew.

Appointment
of members of
the Board.

The Secretary read an extract from the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. 47, dated 18th June, 1936, notifying the appointment of the members of the Board.

First Meeting.

The Secretary read a formal communication dated 29th July, 1936, addressed by the Minister for the Interior to the Chairman, pursuant to Section 10(1) of the Apprenticeship Ordinance, 1936, appointing the first meeting of the Board at 10.30a.m. on 4th August, 1936, at City.

Appointment of
Secretary to the
Board and
Registrar of
Apprenticeship.

The Secretary read a formal communication dated 30th July, addressed by the Secretary, Department of the Interior, to the Chairman, conveying Ministerial approval of the appointment of Mr. H. R. Waterman as Secretary to the Board and Registrar of Apprenticeship. This advice was noted with appreciation by members of the Board.

Chairman's
address to the
Board and general
discussion.

The Chairman greeted members of the Board and expressed the hope that their association would be mutually pleasant as well as interesting and useful.

The Board had now to address itself to the task of completing as soon as possible a working system under the provisions of the Ordinance. Considerable preliminary consideration would be necessary. Members would have become acquainted, from a perusal of the Ordinance, with the system laid down therein, and also had enjoyed the privilege of collective consideration earlier when the draft of the Ordinance was under consideration. The Ordinance was framed on the general bases operating in the States, although it differed somewhat in its arrangement. The interests of the apprentices and the trades were both conserved. A system of registration and recording was entailed, and on that basis the Board would consider any questions as to apprenticeship which might be referred to it from time to time, adjust any difficulties which might occur, and, if difficulties became serious, if necessary terminate an apprenticeship. These features would be found in any apprenticeship scheme.

So far as the Territory was concerned the Board would enjoy the advantage of the absence of any system, which would enable it to introduce a scheme entirely adequate for its purposes from every point of view, subject to the limitations of the Ordinance.

He felt that the question of apprenticeship was one more easy to deal with than the work of some other Boards and Committees, since no conflicting interests needed adjusting. Each member's experiences would be valuable to the Board, and the combination of their experience would be essential to progress in the work of the Board.

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Minutes of the First Meeting (Contd.) 3. 4/8/1936.

General
Discussion.
(Contd.)

A number of youths were ready for apprenticeship, and the Board would find ample work to engage its attention.

Mr. Helson expressed appreciation of his appointment. All members had a similar object in view, namely, the success of industry. The Board would conserve the interests of youths who would be the future captains of industry. He was pleased that an apprenticeship scheme was at last being established.

The industrial unions had been opposed to vocational training to a great extent, but he had adopted a broad view, and, being personally associated with the operation of the scheme, realised its benefits, under supervision. Employers would appreciate that point of view also. If lads could be drafted from the school who would be of immediate use in a trade without preliminary instruction, he was pleased that vocational training had been coupled with apprenticeship.

The production of trainees had been opposed not only in Canberra but elsewhere. New South Wales was the only State in which an active interest had been taken in trainees. He had an open mind upon the subject. The system should relieve unemployment. Whereas an employer probably did not feel disposed to employ an indentured apprentice, there would, in the future, be no excuse for him not to employ a youth as a trainee apprentice.

Mr. Perry stated that it was evident that much thought would need to be devoted to the Board's work to secure the best possible results. Every member of the Board would have a definite responsibility to the youth of the Territory. Possibly its work would have its effect throughout the Commonwealth, particularly if the work were well done.

Mr. Gibson enquired whether or not provision would be made for the representation of parties at Board proceedings. In his opinion that would be unnecessary. There was no provision for that procedure under the Ordinance, and the question had been raised with him in a discussion. He desired also to confirm his opinion that the Board would not be concerned with the placement of apprentices, but that this process would be a matter for employer and prospective apprentice.

Mr. Helson enquired whether the Board would fix rates of pay for apprentices.

The Chairman indicated that the Board would make recommendations. The Ordinance could be considered in detail and a general idea of requirements derived from that consideration.

Declaration
of Apprenticeship
Trades.

The Secretary read an extract from the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. 46, dated 11th June, 1936, notifying a declaration by the Minister for the Interior of the apprenticeship trades of carpentry, painting, plumbing, electrical work, bricklaying, plastering, and engineering.

After discussion, it was decided that data would be obtained to enable consideration by the Board of the feasibility of dissecting trades, e.g., engineering, into motor mechanics, fitting, etc.

Number of
Apprentices
to be taken
annually.
(Section 18(1)):

The Chairman suggested that a commencing date, of say 1st October, to fix the first annual period to which a decision of the Board as to the maximum annual number of apprentices to be taken should apply. This procedure would enable the prior completion of other preliminary procedure.

After discussion this point was left for later decision.

Attendance of
Board's pro-
ceedings by the
public.

Mr. Helson enquired whether the public were to be permitted to attend meetings of the Board.

It was decided that the public should not be admitted to meetings excepting in certain cases by permission of the Board.

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Attendance of
Board's Proceed-
ings by deputies
of members.

Mr. Perry enquired whether the deputies of members were to be permitted to attend meetings of the Board, excepting as deputies.

It was decided that they should not be admitted, excepting at their own expense.

Number of
apprentices -
views of Unions.

Mr. Perry presumed that the Unions would have views regarding the proportion of apprentices to journeymen.

Mr. Helson referred to comments upon this subject included in the Vocational Training Committee's report to the Minister for the Interior some years previously. At that time the building trade in Canberra was at its lowest ebb. The views indicated to the Minister would be a splendid basis for the consideration of the subject by the Board.

It was decided to obtain the information from the Department of the Interior, if possible.

Employment of
minors.

Messrs. Perry and Helson suggested the desirability of facilitating apprenticeship for persons affected by Section 19(1) of the Ordinance.

It was made clear in discussion that the Board was not responsible for the placement of apprentices.

Selection?
Section of
Apprentices.

Mr. Helson referred to the question of responsibility for finding employment. He differed from Mr. Gibson's view, expressed earlier, because he felt a good deal should be done. If recommendations were made by qualified teachers in the Vocational Training School, he was sure prospective employers would not ignore the recommendations. If the Board could assist in providing employment it should do so.

Mr. Helson referred also to the risk of the evasion of the Board's position in the matter of employment of apprentices, if a man in a fairly high position in the Public Service, who might be able to, places a particular boy in, say, the plumbing trade. This difficulty might easily occur in departmental employment - not so much in private employment. Such a case had occurred recently, but the matter had been rectified when he brought the attention of the engineer to the circumstances. If the Department required apprentices it should apply to the Board, which would call for the qualifications of the boy concerned, and make the selection.

The Chairman indicated that preliminary action in selection must be taken by an employer. The proposed agreement between the employer and the apprentice would come before the Board for approval. The proposed agreement could be objected to by the Board only strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

The meeting was adjourned from 12.30p.m. until 2 p.m.

Upon resumption:

Applications of
Trainee
Apprentices.

Mr. Helson enquired why Section 22(2) had been included in the Ordinance.

The Chairman indicated that it had been included at the instance of the Unions, to facilitate the return of the apprentice to the school during time lost between periods of employment.

Time Youths
employed under
the Industrial
Board Award.

Mr. Helson considered it advisable to consider procedure regarding youths at present employed. These should be considered as a category by the Board.

The Chairman indicated that these cases would be dealt with individually as they came before the Board.

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Minutes of the First Meeting (Contd.) 5. 4/8/1936.

Invitation of applications for apprenticeship.

Mr. Helson suggested that the Board inviting persons to apply to employers or the Board for apprenticeship.

Mr. Helson enquired whether there was any legal objection to a major continuing an apprenticeship.

The Chairman stated that there was no objection. A contract of apprenticeship would be paramount. Some types of contract could be repudiated by minors after the attainment of their majority. He would investigate the point.

Restrictions on the taking of apprentices.

The procedure entailed by Section 35 was discussed generally.

The introduction of New South Wales apprentices on Territorial works under contract by New South Wales contractors was considered.

It was decided that the difficulty could not be considered until experience indicated the necessity for the solution of the problem, if it became a problem.

The Chairman thought that if the introduction of New South Wales apprentices were hampered there might be reciprocal action in New South Wales regarding Territorial apprentices.

Penalties with respect to the employment of apprentices.

The provisions of Section 36 were discussed in relation to Section 43 (rates of wages).

The Chairman indicated that the Board would recommend percentages to the Minister, who might make relative Regulations under the Ordinance. The Industrial Board would have no power to fix the wages of apprentices.

Mr. Gibson remarked that the Commonwealth Arbitration Courts Award for carpenters were operative in the Territory. It was possible that circumstances might lead to an approach to the Court by local employers.

The Chairman hoped this disability would not occur.

It was decided that information as to percentage rates for apprentices be secured for the use of the Board.

The Chairman remarked that New South Wales awards contain conditions affecting journeymen and apprentices.

Mr. Styles stated that apprenticeship conditions could be ascertained from indentures.

The Chairman indicated that the Board would need to exercise care that indenture conditions did not conflict with any award.

Evening and day classes in technical education.

Mr. Helson indicated the consensus of opinion among the Unions that technical education should be provided in day classes rather than evening classes.

Mr. Perry reminded the Board that attendance at day classes would react on rates of wages.

Mr. Gibson thought that while an employer might be agreeable to the absence of his apprentice from work while attending the day class during the first year of apprenticeship, he might have other views at a later stage in the apprenticeship. Hard and fast rules could not easily be laid down.

The Chairman indicated that the Apprenticeship Commissioner of New South Wales had advised him that in that State the evening classes were relied upon for technical training. It was not practicable to secure the training in the day time.

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Minutes of the First Meeting (Contd.) 6. 4/8/1936.

Technical
Education
(Contd.)

Mr. Helson instanced a case within his own observation at the Sydney Technical College where the boys attended during the day.

Further discussion was postponed.

Technical
Education.

The Chairman indicated provision in the day classes of the Vocational Training School and the evening classes of the Canberra Trades School. Reports from both would be available to the Board.

Number of
apprentices to
be taken.

Mr. Gibson stated that the Department was anxious to arrange indentures as soon as possible, and that as many apprentices as possible of those selected should commence their apprenticeship at the same time, in order to facilitate a sequence.

Horticultural
apprentices.

The Department desired to arrange indentures for some apprentices in horticulture.

A discussion ensued as to the difficulty of apprenticing youths to men classed as labourers, and it was decided to await the occasion of declaration of the trade.

Declaration of
apprenticeship
trades.

Mr. Styles raised the question of the separation of electrical work and engineering work into sections.

The Chairman indicated that the Minister could amplify the declaration already gazetted.

Mr. Styles advised that it should be possible for a youth to be indentured in two trades.

Electrical
Mechanics.
Electrical
Fitters.
Motor Mechanics.
Fitters and
Machinists.

It was decided to take action to amplify the declared trades of electrical work by the declaration of electrical mechanics, electrical fitting, and of engineering by the declaration of motor mechanics and fitting and machining.

It was decided, further, to ascertain the practice regarding the arrangement of concurrent indentures in motor mechanics and fitting and machining.

Wood working
Machinists.

It was decided to declare wood work machining as an apprenticeship trade.

Number of
apprentices to
be taken.

Procedure with a view to ascertaining the number of apprentices to be taken in the first year was discussed.

Mr. Perry moved:-

"That the Secretary communicate with the Department of the Interior and other employers in the apprenticeship trades already declared, notifying them that the Board had commenced its duties, and that it intends shortly to make a survey with the object of declaring, within the next two months, the number of apprentices that may be taken for the twelve months ensuing as from 1st October, 1936, and requesting that they furnish the following information to assist the Board:-

- (1) Separately the number of indentured and trainee apprentices they propose to take, per employer, within the twelve months commencing 1st October, 1936.
- (2) Separately the number of journeyman at present employed by each employer, and are likely to employ as an average during the period mentioned in (1), and the number employed during the past twelve months.

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Minutes of the First Meeting (Contd.) 7. 4/8/1936.

Number of
apprentices
to be taken.
(Contd.)

The Department of the Interior and private employers should be informed that they would not be committed to take the numbers estimated by them, pursuant to this motion, and that the rates and conditions of apprentices, although not yet determined, could be assumed to be generally on the bases in operation elsewhere."

Mr. Helson seconded the motion, which was carried.

Applications
for Apprenticeship.

The Secretary reported the receipt of several applications from youths for apprenticeship in various trades. These had been acknowledged and the applicants informed that they would be further advised.

It was decided that applicants should be further informed as to the Board's functions in apprenticeship.

Publicity.

It was decided that publicity concerning the work of the Board should be issued at the discretion of the Chairman and Secretary.

Procedure.

It was decided that the Secretary should circulate a draft scheme of procedure and records for consideration at the next meeting.

Date of next
meeting.

It was decided that the next meeting of the Board should be held on 18th August, 1936, and that the hours to be observed generally at meetings should be from 10a.m. to 12 noon and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The meeting terminated at 4.45p.m.

C O N F I R M E D.

C. S. Daley

C H A I R M A N.
18th August, 1936.