

smooth surface for the covering coat, when these operations are performed in the interior of buildings. There is an additional risk that the inmates of a house, particularly children, may inhale or otherwise introduce lead-dust into their systems when the work is done in private houses.

In preparing white-lead in the form used by painters, powdered white-lead is mixed with linseed-oil by grinding them together in a mill. There are six factories in New Zealand carrying on this process, and, as there is a tendency for this industry to increase, the conditions of employment are being carefully watched. Powers are already given in the Factories Act to make special rules to be observed in factories where such a process is carried on, and these powers will be availed of when found necessary; and, in regard to the work done elsewhere, particularly in private houses, it might be desirable to make certain regulations to protect the occupants, and to give powers of inspection to Inspectors to see that they are complied with.

#### APPRENTICESHIP AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

This matter has been the subject of remarks in the annual reports of this Department for the past four years, in which it has been pointed out that probably the two chief causes of the lack of apprentices in many trades were the gradual breaking-down of skill in many industries, and the fact that the wages paid to unskilled and semi-skilled labour (which do not require apprenticeships) are nearly as much as those paid for skilled work. The question has received increased attention of late, and interest in this important problem has become almost world-wide. The Department has been in communication with other countries, and is in possession of up-to-date information regarding what has been done there. The most recent legislation on the subject is that passed by the Union of South Africa, which provides for the regulation of apprenticeship and the training and examination of apprentices in certain trades under the guidance of committees representing employers and workers and the Government. In Australia, too, considerable attention has for several years been given to this question, and Queensland has recently adopted provisions for the examination of boys desiring to enter apprenticeship, and for the proper training and supervision of apprentices.

Among European countries perhaps the most interesting scheme is that adopted by Sweden. In this country the scheme is divided into three parts, viz.: (1.) Training in workshop schools before apprenticeship begins. This training is considered inestimable for boys of fourteen years who are unable to find employment except of the messenger and newsboy type. (2.) Apprenticeship schools for those who have entered employment. Powers are given to each municipality to make attendance at the above schools compulsory up to the age of eighteen years. (3.) After the apprenticeship is completed further training may be obtained in what are termed "trade schools."

The apprenticeship school supplements the practical training obtained in the course of employment, whilst the trade school provides instruction in special subjects applying to each trade, and is intended for those who wish to qualify as foremen or to enter into business on their own account. The scheme is managed by a Board elected by the Municipal Council together with representatives of the various trades and the Government. A small committee is appointed, one for each trade, to supervise the instruction in the different schools.

#### EXPENDITURE OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT DURING THE YEAR.

Salaries, cost-of-living bonus, temporary clerical assistance, fees payable to acting member of Court of Arbitration, grant in lieu of six months' leave to T. H. Giles, refund to Department of Industries and Commerce of salary of P. Hally, allowance to officers performing higher duties, and allowance to police and other officers acting as departmental agents..	£	28,676
Advertising and publications .. .. .		259
Fares, board and lodging, &c., advanced to persons proceeding to employment (see refunds below) .. .. .		365
Fees paid to assessors of Industrial Councils .. .. .		926
Legal and witnesses' expenses (see refunds below) .. .. .		182
Postage, telegrams, telephones, and rent of letter-boxes .. .. .		1,778
Printing and stationery .. .. .		2,969
Office requisites, fuel and lighting .. .. .		331
Travelling allowances and expenses of Inspectors, members of Court of Arbitration, Conciliation Councils, &c., bicycles and motor-cycles, and maintenance thereof .. .. .		4,698
Upkeep of departmental residence .. .. .		12
Miscellaneous expenditure—	£	
Arbitration Court and Conciliation Councils .. .. .		84
General .. .. .		236
		320
		40,516
Less refunds—		
Fares .. .. .		430
Legal and witnesses' expenses .. .. .		60
From Housing Account .. .. .		1,353
Miscellaneous.. .. .		577
		2,420
		<u>£38,096</u>

The above figures do not include a number of items for which provision for payment is made elsewhere than in the Department's vote—viz., Salaries of Judge and members of Court of Arbitration (£3,430), rents, messenger services, cleaning, &c.