

youths cannot be controlled in the matter of the speed limits. "Cheap" driving has been a dear experiment for the Department in connection with tires and upkeep. "Cheap" driving will make a bad investment of the best motor vehicle on the road. Money is saved by care in starting, braking, and gear-changing, but experience and discretion have to be paid for.

Industrial Efficiency

Closely allied with the minimum wage question is the problem of industrial efficiency. Where the minimum wage becomes in practice the minimum, "go-slow" methods are adopted by employees. This furnishes the opponents of the New Zealand arbitration system with a text for their criticisms, though they appear to ignore the fact that the system is elastic, and includes a recognition of piecework. Here again, we could imagine the critic declaring that there are differences in the way jobs are turned out. Our reply to this is, "Give the least competent the minimum piecework rate, and recognise the superior work of others by a higher wage than the minimum." As a rule, the trade unionist is against piecework. The Victorian Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Hagelthorn, who has for some time past been instrumental in arranging for lectures on industrial efficiency, lately organised a series of conferences to discuss the question of piece payment in trades. In his recent report on some of the effects of labour legislation, the secretary for Labour (Mr. H. M. Murphy) recommended the adoption of universal profit-sharing and piece payment in all trades in order to provide an inducement to honest endeavour, and a fairer general form of reward. At the invitation of Mr. Hagelthorn, about 20 employees engaged in factories where piecework is in operation recently agreed to discuss the question of time payment, and assembled one evening to hear an address by Professor P. B. Kennedy, of the United States, and to discuss with him and the Minister the question of piecework or bonus work *versus* day labour. At the meeting, general approval was given to the piecework system, but apprehension was expressed lest unscrupulous employers might cut rates when employees became expert. It was pointed out, however, that labour was now so well organised that no difficulty should be experienced in arranging a schedule of rates for piecework which would be satisfactory to both employer and employee.

"Product Not Hours"

Professor Kennedy, in one of his lectures, put the whole problem of the minimum wage and piece-work into a few crisp, thought stimulating sentences. "I wish to impress on every man's mind," said Professor Kennedy, in his address, "that what wages are paid for is product, not hours. Some men will tell you that a man is worth so much per hour. There is no such thing as a man's worth per hour. We cannot sell hours, therefore we cannot buy them. We can only sell product, therefore, we can only pay for that which produces product in proportion to that value produced. It is foolish to think that one man's time is worth as much as another's who may produce twice as much, and no legislation or organ-

isation can make it so. Any attempt in this direction is to put a premium on laziness and inefficiency, which would shortly act as a boomerang. No nation, business, or individual, can long exist and maintain its relative position among others which try to set aside the universal law of the 'survival of the fittest.' By this I do not mean the law of the beast, the survival of the physically fit, but the law of man, the best combination of the mentally, morally, physically and efficiently fit."

Apprenticeship System Failing

Rapidly the old system of "binding down" a lad to learn a trade is ceasing to attract the rising generation. Apprentices' wages have increased, but the biggest obstacle to getting boys into a trade is the desire of parents to see them engaged in some "clean-handed" occupation, on the clerical side. We cannot all be professionals and brain-workers. Though the machine has diminished the necessity for manual work, this is still the greatest field for the employment of labour, and it becomes an economic problem of grave import if the supply of tradesmen is cut off. Training is needed to make a "tradesman," but this takes time which parents' are loth to give. They prefer, oftentimes, to place their boys into an occupation which pays high wages to young people, but runs them into a dead-end—"thus far, and no further, as the job is not worth it!" Mr. W. H. Bennett of Wellington dealt with this subject at the conference of the New Zealand Builders and Contractors Federation. In a paper full of helpful suggestions, he met the position with frank recognition of the need to make apprenticeship more attractive, and he placed his finger on the weak spot of our technical education system when urging that time off from work should be allowed apprentices who attend the technical classes. A youth who works conscientiously all day is not usually in the proper frame of mind to fully benefit from technical education in the evening, when he is fagged. There is a tendency, too, among the more serious minded boys—they are rare, we admit—to neglect athletics if their evenings can be filled by study. To strike the right balance between both is the point at which the enlightened parent comes in. As for the dread that manual toil repels boys, we are optimistic enough to believe that this is but a passing phase. When parents recognise that the clerical classes are, as a whole, much worse off except in dress and appearance than the well-protected and well organised manual worker, they will hesitate to place their children in a sphere which, except to the very ablest, presents a poor outlook. An able boy placed in a manual calling, will win prominence and reward quicker than if he starts at a ledger or the typewriter. The industrial field is wide, and the opportunities numerous for those who can grasp them.

Sarjeant Art Gallery Competition.

Our desire to publish the details of this competition as quickly as the information was available for publication is responsible for the late publication of this issue. We much regret the delay, but trust our readers will agree with us that it was worth waiting for.