

The Council of Chairmen found, to their regret, that it would be impossible to lay down any rules for the awarding of the three Medals by which the appearance, at least, of denoting different degrees of success amongst exhibitors in the same branch of production could be avoided. Accordingly, after fully explaining their difficulty to Her Majesty's Commissioners, they requested, as a course by which it might be materially diminished, that one of the Medals might be withdrawn.

Of the remaining two, they suggested that one, the Prize Medal, should be conferred wherever a certain standard of excellence in production or workmanship had been attained—utility, beauty, cheapness, adaptation to particular markets, and other elements of merit being taken into consideration, according to the nature of the object; and they recommended that this Medal should be awarded by the Juries, subject to confirmation by the groups.

In regard to the other and larger Medal, they suggested that the conditions of its award should be some important novelty of invention or application, either in material or processes of manufacture, or originality combined with great beauty of design; but that it should not be conferred for excellence of production or workmanship alone, however eminent; and they further suggested that this Medal should be awarded by the Council of Chairmen, upon the recommendation of a Jury, supported by its group.

The principle thus described met the views of Her Majesty's Commissioners, and was subsequently further developed by them in a Minute which they communicated to the Council of Chairmen. (See Appendix C.) Its application, however, was not without difficulties, especially as regarded the Foreign Jurors. Many of these had taken part in the National exhibitions of France and Germany; and to them the distinctive character of the two Medals, and the avoidance of all recognition of degrees of merit between the recipients of prizes were novel principles, and at variance with their experience; inasmuch as one of the chief purposes of the National exhibitions of the Continent has been to distinguish the various degrees of success attained by rival exhibitors.

It was to be expected, therefore, that cases would arise in which the Council Medal, as the higher reward, would be asked for exhibitors whose claims were only somewhat stronger in degree, without differing in kind, from those of others to whom the Prize Medal had been awarded. In such cases it became the duty of the Council of Chairmen to refuse their sanction to the award of the Council Medal, without, however, necessarily impugning the alleged superiority of the article for which it was demanded. On the other hand, some instances have occurred in which they have felt themselves called upon to confirm the claim to a Council Medal where the object for which it was claimed showed, in itself, less merit of execution or manufacture than others of its class. It follows, therefore, that the award of a Council Medal does not necessarily stamp its recipient as a better manufacturer or producer than others who have received the Prize Medal. It is rather a mark of such invention, ingenuity, or originality, as may be expected to exercise an influence on industry more extended, and more important, than could be produced by mere excellence of manufacture.

This is to be borne in mind in considering the list of awards which I have the honour to lay before your Royal Highness; and I trust it will be found that the Juries have succeeded in doing justice to the exhibitors of every Nation and Class, and that they have not departed in any import-

ant degree from the purpose of Her Majesty's Commissioners.

One of the first instructions addressed to the Juries by the Council of Chairmen was to the effect that the Prizes should be awarded without reference to the Country of the exhibitors, the Exhibition being considered in this respect as recognizing no distinction of Nations.

It is gratifying to add that the Jurors of every Country cordially acquiesced in this principle, and that, notwithstanding unavoidable differences of opinion, uninterrupted harmony prevailed amongst them throughout the whole course of their labours. It is not too much to hope that the happy influence of this intercourse may extend and endure far beyond the present occasion.

It is not necessary that I should detain your Royal Highness and Her Majesty's Commissioners with a recital of the other instructions framed by the Council of Chairmen for the guidance of the Juries, or with a detailed account of their proceedings in the discharge of their own functions.

The number of Prize Medals awarded is 2,918. The number of Council Medals is 170.

It is important to observe that no more than one Medal of either denomination has been allotted to one exhibitor in the same Class, although he may have contributed to that Class more than one article deserving of reward.

The Juries have found it just, in framing their Reports, to make honourable mention of certain exhibitors whose contributions were not such as to entitle them to receive a Medal. Some have supplied specimens of raw materials which, although curious and instructive, do not imply any great merit of production on the part of the exhibitor; and others have furnished articles of manufacture which, without reaching a high degree of excellence, are interesting as examples of the processes, or present condition, of the trades which they illustrate.

Before concluding, I trust I may be allowed to add, that it would be difficult duly to estimate the time and labour expended by the Jurors in their endeavour to discharge faithfully the important duty confided to them. The number of Exhibitors was about 17,000. Of these many, who were reckoned but once in the Catalogue, contributed a large variety of objects, and came within the province of more than one Jury; whilst, in other cases, towns, and even whole countries, were counted as single exhibitors, although they presented for examination every kind of manufacture and raw produce which their ingenuity and natural resources could furnish. Upon the whole, the task of the Juries involved the consideration and judgment of at least a million articles; the difficulties attending it being not a little increased by the want of a uniform system of classification of the subjects in some of the Foreign divisions, and by unavoidable imperfections in the Catalogue.

In these circumstances, the Juries can scarcely venture to hope that accidental omissions may not have occurred; but they have the satisfaction of feeling that these, if any, are not attributable to a want of care or diligence on their part.

It now only remains for me, in laying the result of our labours respectfully before your Royal Highness and Her Majesty's Commissioners, to offer, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, our grateful acknowledgment of the honourable confidence which you have placed in us, and to express the hope that we shall be found to have fulfilled our trust in a manner worthy of the noble undertaking in which we are proud to have been called upon to bear a part.

NEWSPAPER

