

REPORT OF VISCOUNT CANNING,
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF CHAIRMEN OF JURIES,
ON PRESENTING THE AWARDS OF THE JURIES TO THE
ROYAL COMMISSION.

HAVING had the honour of acting as President of the Council of Chairmen of the Juries, it falls to me to lay before your Royal Highness and Her Majesty's Commissioners the Reports of the several Juries upon the subjects submitted to them for examination, and the names of the exhibitors whom they have judged entitled to rewards.

In doing so, it will be convenient that I should state briefly the Principle upon which, by the authority of Her Majesty's Commissioners, the Juries were constituted.

The various subjects included in the Exhibition were divided, in the first instance, into Thirty Classes. Of these, two were subsequently found to embrace fields of action too large for Single Juries, and were therefore divided into Sub-Juries. This increased the number of Acting Juries to Thirty-four.

Each of these Thirty-four Juries consisted of an equal number of British subjects and of Foreigners. The British Jurors were selected by Her Majesty's Commissioners from lists furnished by the Local Committees of various towns, each town being invited to recommend persons of skill and information in the manufactures or produce for which it is remarkable. The Foreign Jurors were appointed by authorities in their own countries, in such relative proportion amongst themselves as was agreed upon by the Foreign Commissioners sent here to represent their respective Governments.

In the event of a Jury finding themselves deficient in technical knowledge of any article submitted to them, they were empowered to call in the aid of Associates. These Associates, who acted as advisers only, without a vote, but whose services were of the greatest value, were selected either from the Jurymen of other classes, or from lists of persons who had been recommended as Jurors, but who had not been permanently appointed to any Jury.

Each Jury was superintended by a Chairman, chosen from its number by Her Majesty's Commissioners. The Deputy Chairman and the Reporter were elected by the Jurors themselves.

Such was the constitution of the Thirty-four Juries taken singly. They did not, however, act independently of each other, inasmuch as they were associated into six Groups, each Group consisting of such Juries as had to deal with subjects in some degree of kindred nature; and before any decision of a Jury could be considered as final, it was required that it should be brought before the assembled Group of which that Jury formed a part, and that it should be approved by them.

The chief object of this provision was that none of the many Foreign Nations taking part in the Exhibition should incur the risk of seeing its interests overlooked or neglected from the accident (an unavoidable one in many instances) of its being unrepresented in any particular Jury.

Each Group of Juries received the assistance of a Deputy Commissioner and of a Special Commissioner, appointed by Her Majesty's Commissioners to record its proceedings, to furnish information respecting the arrangements of the Exhibition, and otherwise to facilitate the labours of the Juries composing the Group.

It was further determined by Her Majesty's Commissioners, that the Chairmen of the Juries, consisting of British subjects and of Foreigners in equal numbers, should be formed into a Council; and that the duties of the Council should be, to determine the conditions upon which, in accordance with certain general principles previously laid down by Her Majesty's Commissioners, the different Prizes should be awarded; to frame rules to guide the working of the Juries; and to secure, as far as possible, uniformity in the result of their proceedings.

These are the most important features of the system upon which the Jurors found themselves organized. I will now refer briefly to their course of action.

The Council of Chairmen, in proceeding to the discharge of their duties, were met at the outset by a serious difficulty. Her Majesty's Commissioners had expressed themselves desirous that merit should be rewarded wherever it presented itself; but anxious at the same time to avoid the recognition of competition between individual Exhibitors. They had also decided that the Prizes should consist of three Medals of different sizes; and that these should be awarded, not as first, second, and third in degree for the same class of subjects and merit, but as marking merit of different kinds and character.

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