

### Presentation of Medal and Diplomas.

Opportunity was taken to present some diplomas and a medal to the winners of the 'general knowledge' competition, which was promoted by the Federated Catholic Clubs, and held last November.

A gold medal was awarded to Mr. D. B. O'Connor (Waihi) for first prize in the competition mentioned. A handsome diploma of merit was given to Mr. T. J. Ryan (Waihi) for third place in the competition, and a similar diploma to Mr. G. M. Wormington (Hokitika) for second place. Mr. Lynch (Waihi) acknowledged the prizes on behalf of Messrs. O'Connor and Ryan, and expressed his gratification at the fact that the first and third places were taken by his club. As no delegate was present from Hokitika, the diploma was handed to the secretary of the conference for transmission to Mr. Wormington.

### Communion and Breakfast.

On Easter Sunday, all the delegates, with the members of St. Benedict's Catholic Club, approached the Holy Table in a body at St. Benedict's Church. Afterwards the officers of the club entertained the visitors at breakfast, over which Mr. A. J. Fernandez presided. Several ladies were present. The first toast was 'The Clergy,' which was proposed by Mr. O'Leary (Hamilton). He expressed his appreciation of the interest which Father Forde had taken in the conference.

Father Forde, on behalf of the Bishop and clergy, thanked all for the manner in which they had honored the toast. It really gave him great pleasure to attend the conference and join in the discussions.

The next toast was 'The Federated Catholic Clubs of New Zealand.' Mr. Fernandez, in an appropriate speech, said that federation was necessary to make the Catholic clubs a success. The federation of clubs must be productive of good, particularly in the religious, educational, and social sense.

Mr. Dec, on behalf of the Federation, responded, and agreed as to the necessity for federation. He dwelt on the object and advantages of the federation.

Mr. Foy proposed the toast of 'The Catholic Federation.' He said that one of the objects of the Catholic Federation was to assist in every possible way Catholic young men's clubs. It was therefore in the interests of members to assist in carrying out the work of the Catholic Federation.

Mr. Temm replied for the Catholic Federation, and strongly advised all who were not already members of the Catholic Federation to become members at once.

Mr. Lafferty, on behalf of the visiting delegates, proposed the toast of the 'Auckland Clubs.' He expressed his appreciation of the kindness of the St. Benedict's Club in giving their rooms for the use of the conference. He paid a tribute to the good work done by the Marist Brothers' Old Boys' Club, which was most successful in every way.

Mr. Fitzgerald replied on behalf of the M.B.O.B., and thanked Mr. Lafferty very heartily for the kind remarks made about his club.

Mr. Reid responded on behalf of the St. Benedict's Club. He thanked Mr. Lafferty for his words, and mentioned that the club possessed a member who had qualified for the M.A. degree.

The last toast on the list was 'The Ladies,' which was proposed by Mr. Sellars, and responded to by Mr. Forster.

On Sunday evening the members again met for a short time. After the business was concluded, refreshments were partaken of, and a vote of thanks was passed to Father Forde for his extreme kindness to the delegates. A hearty vote of thanks was also passed to Mr. T. H. Forster, who filled the position of secretary to the conference in the absence of the secretary to the federation, for the good work done by him.

On Monday morning all the delegates who could spare the time were taken for a motor ride around Auckland and its beautiful suburbs by the kindness of Father Forde.

## Science Siftings

### Thread.

Do you ever stop and think, when you are sewing away of an afternoon, what a wonderful thing is the thread? To begin with, it is made in large factories, and there, too, are manufactured the wooden spools on which it is wrapped for the market. Perhaps you have wondered why thread is numbered. This is to distinguish between the different kinds of thread. No. 1 is the heaviest cotton thread; it takes 840 yards of this to weigh a pound. With this as a basis, No. 50 must be exactly fifty times as fine as No. 1; in fact, any number you find marked on a spool of cotton signifies that the cotton is precisely that many times finer than No. 1. The highest number in general use is 100. Of course, you know there are three different kinds of thread—cotton, linen, and silk.

### The Salt-supply of the World.

That the salt industry in the United Kingdom is one of considerable magnitude is evident from the fact that it produces nearly one-eighth of the world's supply. According to the latest available figures, the world's output for twelve months is 16,558,676 tons. The British Empire supplied 3,545,150 tons, of which 1,873,550 came from the United Kingdom and 1,300,477 from India. There are three principal sources from which salt is obtained—i.e., salt lakes, the sea, and salt-mines. The great Salt Lake in Utah, America, provides a very good quality of salt, but it has to be purified before it is suitable for the table. The world depends for its chief supply on the beds of salt rock underground. The biggest salt-mines are in Poland and Austria-Hungary, some of which have been worked for hundreds of years, and contain dining-rooms, ball-rooms, and chapels hewn out of the solid salt rock. Within the last generation a new method has been found of mining the salt. Instead of, as formerly, making shafts down which the men are swung, and up which the salt is raised after being hewn or blasted, the following method is adopted. Holes are bored in the ground, sometimes from 500ft to 1200ft in depth, until the salt beds are reached. Tubes are then inserted from 9in to 12in in diameter, and water is sent down to the bottom, where it dissolves the salt rock, forming strong brine. This eventually rises up the tube, whence it is pumped to the surface. If quite saturated it then contains 26 per cent. of salt, the remainder being water generally colored with clay or other impurity.

### Uses of Sawdust.

American and Canadian sawmills have discovered that the sawdust which they have been perplexed how to rid themselves of as a worthless encumbrance is worth at least £8 per ton. In Baltimore a chemist has perfected a process of extracting gas from sawdust, adequate enough to supply a city like Ottawa with light and heat at 5d per 1000 feet. This is thought to portend that around the great sawmills, which have been emptying their dust into the Ottawa River, a variety of new industries subsisting on it are likely to grow up. In Austria, where everything in the shape of fuel is being carefully searched for, sawdust is impregnated with a mixture of tarry substances and heated to the proper temperature; it is then passed over a plate of iron heated by steam, from which a screw-conveyer takes it to a press, where it is compressed into briquettes of the required size. The press turns out about nineteen every minute, weighing two-fifths of a pound each, and measuring 6in by 2½in by 1½in. One factory alone produces something like 7,000,000 briquettes a year. For many years the French have extracted coloring dyes from sawdust. The sawdust, it appears, is acted upon by sulphur and caustic soda in a furnace. Sulphuretted hydrogen is liberated in large quantities, and the vegetable substance, whatever it may be is rendered soluble in water, to which it imparts a strong color, varying with the substance employed. These solutions are employed as dyes, which are fixed by passing the fabric through boiling bichromate of potash.

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