

grown in New Zealand. It may be remarked that the certificate and frame were specially prepared for the society's annexe at the recent Exhibition, and formed its central exhibit, its value therefore being enhanced by a notable association with, perhaps, the most important event in the Colony's history. It is certainly a compliment to the gentleman who furnished the particulars of the sad occurrence to the society for its consideration to read the following heading of the official document:—The facts are so clearly and concisely stated by an eye-witness, Peter Francis Rogan, in his statutory declaration, which accompanies the application, that I cannot do better than give it here in full' (which is done without further comment).

Reefton

(From an occasional correspondent.)

May 2.

The Reefton Catholic church has been repaired and painted, and is now the handsomest building in the town.

A meeting of the Catholic residents of Cronadon was held on April 28, the Rev. Father Gallais presiding, when it was decided that immediate steps be taken to secure a site, and collect funds towards the erection of a church there. A new railway station is about to be built in the locality, and, with the abundance of timber, coal, and also valuable lands, there is no doubt that the Catholic population will be largely increased in the near future.

The Speed of Express Trains

Owing to various reasons, but more especially to the adoption of the narrow-gauge system in this Colony, even our express trains do not travel at a rate which would cause anxiety to the most timid. In the United States, where the saving of time is of the utmost importance, the maintenance of a high rate of speed between certain commercial centres is the rule. In Great Britain, where the people are inclined to take life easier than in the United States, there has been a great acceleration in the rate of speed of express trains of recent years, this being due mainly to the competition of rival companies for passenger traffic. On the Continent, especially in France, there is some very fast travelling. Very soon the Orleans Railway Company will have a wonderful new locomotive running south of Bordeaux. Paris to Bordeaux at present takes seven hours to accomplish. The new engine will knock two hours off that time; for speed trials have shown that it can maintain an average of seventy-five miles an hour.

To literally keep pace with the times railway companies are always building new types of locomotives. And when a promising fresh-comer, like the Orleans flier, is finished, it is taken out when there is little traffic on some length of 'road' and given a speed trial, or 'run against the clock,' to see what it can do.

Speed trials of railway trains are carried out in two ways. There are various mechanical speed recorders, which, generally actuated by the whirling wheels of the engine, indicate the pace attained by means of a hand moving on a dial, much after the same fashion as cyclometers indicate distance travelled, and just as the speed indicators of cycles or motor-cars work.

The Most Accurate and Useful Results,

however, are those obtained by human timekeepers travelling on the train. The timekeeper has with him a shorthand clerk to note the intermediate times as the mile-posts and distance-posts fly by. Those, with the train going at high speed, require to be looked out for very carefully. The expert uses, perhaps, three stop-watches and an ordinary watch; and by stopping one watch and starting another at each quarter-mile—the assistant immediately jotting down the figures—times for all parts of the run, up-grade and down-grade, are obtained. The watch itself gives the time for the entire run, which, if no mistake has been made, will, of course, be the exact total of all the figures the assistant has entered in his note-book.

'The fastest train in the world' is always being claimed by some country or other—most often America, not so very often Great Britain. The reason for this is simple. British railway companies care little or nothing about the 'sentimental' aspect of the case. To hold the 'world's record' will not bring them any more passengers; railroad-racing is expensive work, especially

in 'wear and tear.' Therefore the title is left to those who care to claim it, and a British railroad race against time only occurs when a rival company has to be beaten in the journey to some point that two or more companies serve. Then, naturally enough, 'world's record' may be beaten; but it is not what the competing trains were primarily 'out' for. With the United States the case is quite different. To hold the record is the dearest wish of many of the great companies there; and large sums are spent in attempts to regain or improve it.

The Driver of the 'Record Express'

is a hero in the railway world; maybe he earns substantial sums for 'fastest trips.' Between two 'crack' drivers keen rivalry existed. On two consecutive days last year they, with different engines, 'by authority' had a 'cut at record.' One man had a square meal before entering his 'cab,' to avoid wasting time in feeding whilst driving. 'I didn't,' said the other man, who won; 'I got on board hungry, and I guess I thought less of risks than of half a duck and green peas getting cold at the other end.'

However carefully express locomotives may be constructed, their speed trials may bring to light defects, usually minor ones, that exist in them. With what minuteness details are adjusted may be judged from the fact that, in some instances, hollow 'pockets' are left in the balance-weights of the wheels. If the time trial shows that the engine is slowed because its driving-gear is not properly 'balanced,' melted lead is poured into the 'pockets' until correct running is arrived at.

Up-to-date in all things, Japan holds time trials of her, mostly imported, locomotives. The standard gauge of line in Japan is 3ft 6in, against the British 4ft 8½in; but even on so narrow a track good speeds are obtained. The watch has shown that Japan's speediest locomotives are those of British build.

Unrehearsed Speed Trials.

not infrequently, take place when trains are coming down the tremendous slopes of the Rocky Mountains. The brakes may fail to hold the train, and such runaways are regularly watched for by pointsmen, who switch them aside into long sidings built to run steeply uphill, and which soon safely put an end to the unauthorised 'record-making.'

In considering the question of timing the speed trials of railway trains it should (says an exchange) be borne in mind that, according to whether the road goes up or down, the pace during the run varies. Looking at the times taken of British expresses we find that on some parts of journeys done at an average of fifty-five to sixty-five miles an hour a maximum speed of eighty to eighty-six miles an hour is accomplished. The watch shows that, for comparatively short lengths, the express on its time trial may leap down declines at ninety miles an hour; a hundred miles is not unknown. Those may be mere 'spurts,' but official time trials prove that several British trains have done eighty miles an hour, and over, for more than a dozen miles at a stretch.

Appendicitis a Modern Complaint

The word appendicitis (says the 'New York Sun') was coined in 1886 by Dr. Reginald H. Fitz, a Boston physician. He says he invented it to suit his purpose of calling attention to inflammation of the appendix as an object of direct treatment. Before that time the names used had not given the appendix itself the discredit belonging to it as the actual cause of the trouble.

Even yet, physicians say they don't know what is the function of the appendix. The causes of the disease are better understood.

For a time everybody was blaming grape seeds. The theory has been exploded. Foreign bodies, such as pins, seeds, stones, bullets, and bones are not found in the great majority of cases.

In 1000 cases at Johns Hopkins hospital foreign bodies were found in only four. In many cases the contents of the appendix resemble fruit stones, but they are really organic matter and salts.

Violent exertion and blows are causes of the disease far more often than is generally supposed. A long bicycle ride, a leap from a street car, an hour of swimming, exposure to cold, a blow of the fist, a kick, a fall, a bruise, or any one of a hundred other applications of force may bring about the disease.

Of 4028 autopsies performed at the Boston City, Johns Hopkins and Rhode Island hospitals, there were