

AN ELECTRIC EXCAVATING MACHINE

The credit of being the first in the Dominion to introduce an electric clay excavator belongs to Messrs. C. A. and W. Shiel, of Dunedin. A demonstration of the working of the machine was given at the firm's quarry, Forbury road, on Wednesday of last week, when there was a large attendance of architects, engineers, and others present. Shovels of a somewhat similar sort were used to dig the Panama Canal, but this machine that the Messrs. Shiel have imported is of the very latest type, only recently designed by the Thew Automatic Shovel Company, of America. In all previous machines several engines or motors have been used, but in this machine all the operations of hoisting, swinging, crowding, and travelling are controlled by means of frictions from a single electric motor. The *Evening Star*, describing this wonderful machine, says it looks like a hut crane from beneath the jib of which works a thrusting arm like the neck of a colossal snake. The simile seems to suit. Imagine this monster snake with a head like a great dredge bucket, with projecting steel teeth, and let the fancy picture the mammoth reptile shortening and lengthening its neck, and smelling for the point at which to strike, and you have the machine as it is in action. As worked yesterday, it hit slightly into the clay surface, eating a shade downwards at every thrust, then pushed forward till the bucket was full, and then with an upward movement ripped away mouthfuls of the face to the surface. It was amazing to see one man controlling all these motions, and to note that it kept two lines of trucks going. We were told that it will operate over a face of 60 feet in width and of any height, and that it may be used to dig 4ft below its rails and thus start a new face. The problem at the works now is not how to get enough clay to the tip, but how to keep the tip clear.

After watching the machine in work for nearly half an hour, the company repaired to Mr. C. A. Shiel's house, where tea was served.

Mr. J. Blair Mason (engineer of the Otago Harbor Board) proposed the health of Shiel Bros., and in doing so thanked the firm for their invitation, referred to their enterprise and public spiritedness, and said that he was very much impressed with the efficiency of the machine—so much so that he had no doubt a machine of the same type would be sooner or later installed by the Harbor Board, that body having plenty of work upon which it could be profitably employed.

The toast was very cordially honored.

Mr. C. A. Shiel, in returning thanks on behalf of the firm, said that the starting of such a machine had been the dream of their lives. They hoped now to be able to get plenty of stuff in any weather, and not to have to wait for a supply because the work was disagreeable and difficult. The machine cost about £1300, and it would provide the material for 20,000 bricks at a cost of 1s 3d, apart from wear and tear and the operator's wages. In the future they hoped to work the trucking also by electric energy, by means of trucks fitted with motors like those under the trams.

The Boy Proof Watch at 5/- is a watch that no man need be ashamed of, especially when it will keep time to a tick. You should see them at Smith and Laing's, Invercargill.

ROCKEFELLER ON CATHOLIC CHARITIES

In an article entitled 'Benevolent Foundations and Efficient Philanthropy,' by John D. Rockefeller, which appears in the April 10 issue of the New York *Evening Post*, we find the following interesting testimony:

'Just here it occurs to me to testify to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church, as I have observed in my experience, has advanced a long way in this direction. I have been surprised to learn how far a given sum of money has gone in the hands of priests and nuns, and how really effective is their use of it. I fully appreciate the splendid service done by other workers in the field, but I have seen the organisation of the Roman Church secure better results with a given sum of money than other church organisations are accustomed to secure from the same expenditure. I speak of this merely to point the value of the principle of organisation, in which I believe so heartily. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the centuries of experience which the Church of Rome has gone through to perfect a great power of organisation.'

Karangahake

(From a correspondent.)

May 24.

The annual meeting of the Catholic Club was held on the 23rd inst., when the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Mr. M. Meehan; vice-presidents Messrs. Fallon, Palmer, and Kenny; secretary, Mr. Buckler; treasurer, Mr. F. Ryan; auditors, Messrs. Maguire and Patton. The balance sheet presented to the meeting showed a very healthy condition of affairs, a respectable amount lying to the club's credit in the Savings Bank. Votes of thanks to the outgoing officials were responded to by the late president and secretary. Taken altogether, the outlook for the club has never been better than at present.

The club is about to suffer a severe loss by the departure for the front of Mr. M. Farrell (late secretary). The members will miss him very much, as he has been a tower of strength to the club. He has been most attentive to his secretarial duties, and has always had the interest of the club at heart.

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