

THE CORK CITY ENGINEER APPOINTMENT.

IT is only too clear that the action of the Cork Corporation is altogether indefensible and reprehensible also, in this matter. It is needless to say we have no personal bias or leanings, and it is a matter of indifference to us what gentleman was elected to fill the office, providing he was qualified, and that the election proceeded on fair lines. The Cork Town Council, in our opinion, were bound to act upon the report of the examiners. Eleven candidates submitted to be examined (one afterwards withdrawing). The examination of the candidates occupied six hours on each of the two appointed days, the examiners being Mr. Jack, the principal teacher in the School of Engineering, Queen's College ; Mr. Kirkby, one of the County Surveyors ; and Mr. Barry, of the Harbour Board—gentlemen who were qualified for the task. Their report to the Council ends:—"We consider the following seven—namely, John Horan (P. Lyman and J. O'B. Moylan, equal), W. H. Warren, W. Atkins, M. J. M'Mullen, F. J. Joyce, are fairly qualified for the office with regard to their professional knowledge, past experience, and general competency and efficiency, and of these the first three on the list have given evidence of superior ability and extended knowledge."

Detailed particulars of the marks allowed to each candidate in the subjects on which they were severally examined, have been published in the Cork papers, and this return goes certainly to prove that the local and elected candidate was at the bottom of the list. For aught we may know, the appointed gentleman may be fairly qualified for his office, though a Cork journal says that the examiners in reporting him so "were guilty of a slight stretch either of imagination or generosity," and then it proceeds to deal with the marks awarded, which, of course, as analysed, proves its case. We do not like to use hard words, but we must say that the surroundings of the Cork City Engineer's election is only one more illustration of the manner in which these appointments are conducted in other cities in Ireland and the sister kingdom. Local men are often selected beforehand, and the election is a foregone conclusion, public advertisements and occasional examinations to the contrary. If a system of open competition is honestly determined upon, it should be fairly carried out, and the most proficient candidate should be appointed. A new election is demanded on the part of several in Cork, but we are not quite sure that it would be more satisfactory than the first to those who on personal grounds feel aggrieved, or those who on grounds of public morality consider the City of Cork scandalised through the action of its Town Council.

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