

EXHIBITION OF INDUSTRY OF ALL NATIONS, TO BE HOLDEN IN LONDON IN 1851.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER, 14th March, 1850.

Her Majesty's Commissioners for the promotion of the Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations to be holden in London in the year 1851, after careful consideration of the arrangements to be made for the admission of the productions of foreign countries to the Exhibition, have directed the publication of the following statement for the information and guidance of Foreign Exhibitors.

The Commissioners have already given notice that, however large may be the building that is to be erected, it is necessary that they should reserve to themselves ample powers of selection and rejection in respect of the articles which may be forwarded for exhibition. The necessity for making some provision for limiting the extent, and defining the character, of the Exhibition, is too obvious to need any comment; but the mode in which the powers thus reserved should be exercised, particularly with reference to the productions of foreign countries, is a matter requiring very serious deliberation.

The Commissioners have felt that it would be desirable, as far as possible, to prevent any persons from sending hither articles which cannot be admitted, rather than to reject the articles after their arrival in London. They feel also that the delicate and responsible task of deciding on the admission or rejection of articles destined for exhibition by foreign contributors ought not to be imposed upon any English tribunal, but should be referred to one having the confidence of the Exhibitors themselves, and standing entirely free from possible imputations of national partiality. They accordingly propose to admit to exhibition such foreign articles only as may be forwarded to them by the Central Authority (whatever may be its nature) in each country. They will communicate to such Central Authority the amount of space which can be allowed to the productions of the country for which it acts, and will also state the conditions and limitations which may from time to time be decided on with respect to the admission of articles. All articles forwarded by such Central Authority will then be admitted, provided they do not require a greater aggregate amount of space than that assigned to the productions of the country from which they come; and, provided also, that they do not violate the conditions and limitations of which due notice shall have been given. It will rest with the Central Authority in each country to decide upon the merits of the several articles presented for exhibition, and to take care that those which are sent are such as fairly represent the industry of their fellow countrymen.

Her Majesty's Commissioners will consider that to be the Central Authority in each case, which is stated to be so by the Government of its country. Having once been put in communication with a Central Authority in any country they must decline, absolutely and entirely, any communication with private and unauthorized individuals; and should any such be addressed to them, they can only refer it to the central body. This decision is essentially necessary, in order to prevent confusion.

No articles of foreign manufacture, to whomsoever they may belong, or wheresoever they may be, can be admitted for exhibition, unless they come with the sanction of the Central Authority of the country of which they are the produce. The Commissioners do not insist upon such articles being in all cases actually forwarded by the Central Authority, though they consider that this would generally be the most satisfactory arrangement; but it is indispensable that the sanction of such Authority should in all cases be expressly given, and that it be held responsible for the fitness of such articles for exhibition, and for not authorizing the exhibition of a greater quantity than can be accommodated in the space assigned to the productions of the country in question.

With regard to the amount of space that can be given, the Commissioners propose at once to communicate with each foreign country. It must be obvious that the difficulty of fixing the amount in each case is extreme, as the Commissioners have to consider, not only the extent and population of each country, but the nature of the articles it produces, the quantities it is likely to send; which of course involves, among other considerations, the question of proximity and of the facilities for transmission to England. The productions sent will in some cases be bulky, and will require a larger amount of space than the produce likely to come from other countries, though the latter may be much the more valuable. It thus becomes impossible, in the absence of information from each country, to lay down rules which shall not be open to objection. At the same time, the Commissioners feel that it is better at once to give a definite and tangible shape to their proceedings by laying down something in the nature of a rule, however arbitrary, than to postpone the attempt till they are in possession of information which cannot be collected for a very long time. They have therefore resolved that they will allot one-half of the total amount of space at their command to the productions of Great Britain and her colonies, and will divide the remaining half among the other nations of the world; communicating to each country the space they propose to set aside for its productions, and requesting information as to the mode in which it is proposed that such space should be filled. In case the Central Authority in any country should be of opinion that the space allotted to the productions of that country is greater than it will require, the Commissioners have to request that this opinion may be communicated to them, as it is obvious that it