

TEXAS PIONEER



Illustration of Condecoration Jewel. Harral Ayres in Oval.

THE MOST distinguished Royal Order of Spain, the order memorializing the golden age of Ferdinand and Isabella, was conferred on Harral Ayres, April 29, at a formal diplomatic reception participated in by Spanish, American, Mexican and Texas officials and over 100 distinguished guests. Don Pablo de Ubarri, representing the Spanish King, presented the Condecoration of the Royal Order of Isabel la Católica in the name of His Majesty Alfonso XIII. Don Ubarri was in his gold-brocaded uniform and chapeau. The official group surrounding Don Ubarri, consisting of State, county and city officials, civic club presidents, the commanding general of the 8th Corps Area of the army, and the Consul-General of Mexico, were all in formal dress and diplomatic usage prevailed. The distinc-

tion conferred on Harral Ayres was in recognition of his 10 years' leadership of the Old Spanish Trail development, today the most complete transcontinental highway in the United States, connecting St. Augustine and San Diego through the historic Spanish cities from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The ceremony was in the art salon of Mrs. Henry Dought's home where all the surroundings were in keeping with the diplomatic function. Both Spanish and American music were played, and the addresses were read in Spanish and American, as etiquette required. All guests stood during the ceremony.

The Condecoration jewel is a double-sided cross and sunburst in the red and gold Spanish colors, two inches in diameter, suspended from a laurel leaf. On one side the name

of the order and monogram. On the reverse side, the coat of arms and "La lealtad Acrisolada," expressive of loyalty and merit. The title conferred is that of Knight Commander, the highest appointive title—the highest title, Knight of the Great Cross, comes through promotion from a lower title. The complimentary title is *ilustísimo*, illustrious. So carefully are the honors of the Order guarded, that this Condecoration cross must be returned to the Spanish crown in case of death or promotion to the higher title.

Appointment to the Order is said to be rare in this country. Lower titles and presentation by mail is said to have prevailed in other instances. Letters and telegrams paying tribute to the Old Spanish Trail leader were received from all over the United States.

(turn to next page).