

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS

New Ideas Worked Out, Patented and Put in Operation.

THE WIDENING FIELD OF ELECTRICITY

Progress in That Science Particularly Notable—Novel Contrivances Approved by the Patent Office—New and Useful Mechanical Appliances.

About three years ago the forestry division of the Department of Agriculture published a large report on the use of metal ties on railways, the objects being to encourage an economical use of wood and the introduction of steel ties if possible. Mr. Fernow estimated at that time that the railways of the country required the best timber from 1,000,000 acres of forest land annually. The report was widely circulated and aroused an interest in the subject of all-metal track which has not yet abated. Some time ago it was announced that metal ties had been abandoned after a long trial on the Pennsylvania lines in this country and the State railway in Belgium. This has stirred up an Austrian engineer, of some prominence, Wilhelm Ast, who claims that at least the Belgian experiments were badly conducted, and failure was natural. He states that on the Kaiser Frederick Northern railway in Austria metal ties have been used with entire success for the last several years. After comparative trials for this time the metal ties are still practically as good as new, while the oak ties show considerable deterioration. Moreover, the cost of maintenance of an all-metal track was nearly 14 per cent less than that of one using wooden sleepers. He ascribes its unsatisfactory results on the Belgian roads entirely to the use of defective rail fastenings and unsuitable steel. The plates under the rails where they rest on the sleepers he considers just as necessary with metal as with wooden ties, and no plates were used on the Belgian roads. Moreover, he claims that the steel employed in making the ties was much too brittle for the purpose. This was shown by the fact that the punching holes for the fastenings had cracked. If the fastenings were so badly designed that they quickly became loose, it is natural that passing trains would break up the rock ballast and produce an unsatisfactory track in a short time, but Mr. Ast claims that with a well designed all-metal roadway the results would have been quite different. It is unfortunate that he did not discuss the reason of the Pennsylvania failure, for the officers of that railway, who claim that their system are regarded as pretty well posted in their specialty. As it is, inventors will probably go on patenting innumerable impossible ties for some time to come, until the experiments show a satisfactory one, which none have yet apparently done.

Lighting Railway Cars.

In view of the enterprise shown by many American railway companies in making ties in regard to securing the most efficient, safe and agreeable lighting of railway cars much interest attaches to the announcement that the Erie railway, which runs from Erie, Pa. to Norfolk, Va., will shortly introduce electric lighting on its saloon cars, sleeping and toilet cars of the first, second and third class. The company has decided, after long trials on saloon cars, to experiment on a large scale. The current is obtained from storage batteries, supplying lamps of 6, 8 and 10-candle power, according to the cars. The batteries, mounted in boxes in groups of two, are very portable. Eight or ten portable lamps are used. The first class cars, 8-candle power for second and 6-candle power for third class and lavatories of all classes, so that a good light is provided throughout. The lamps are carried by a hardwood cylinder, carrying a lamp socket and reflector. The latter being very white enameled iron. This apparatus is slipped into the lantern, taking the place of the oil lamp. Two switches are fixed in a little box at either end of the car, so that the lamps can be lighted or extinguished from the outside. The connections are so arranged that the batteries can be charged without taking them out of the compartments. The cables, which are made specially strong to stand the wear and tear, are run along the roof and held in place by soldered zinc clips. One great advantage of this method is that, should at any moment the oil lamps be required, all that is necessary is to open the lantern, take out the electric lamp with socket, and slip the oil lamp into the same place.

Triple Expansion Engines.

One of the features of recent electrical work is the use of triple expansion engines of the marine type, coupled direct to two multipolar dynamos, one being placed at each end of the engine, in central station work. An engine of this type, recently tested at Milwaukee, varied in speed only 1.7 per cent from no load up to full load, although the electrical conditions under which it was working were unfavorable. It is of the 700-horse power machine, triple expansion, three-crank inverted cylinder condensing type, designed for an initial steam pressure of 160 pounds, and a vacuum of 28 inches. The cylinders have 19 1/2 and 38 1/2 inch diameters, and are 24 and 30 inches and are all steam jacketed. They are fitted with double-ported, balanced piston valves, one for the high pressure cylinder and two for each of the low pressure cylinders. The condenser is in the foundation box, and is of the surface pattern, with 1,068 brass tubes 9 feet 6 inches long. The crank shaft is of cast steel 8 inches in diameter, with forged iron balanced disks, to which the 8 1/2 inch crank pins are attached. There are two bearings to each crank, and an additional large bearing on each end of the shaft to carry the armature. On the shaft are three concentric casings operated by its own independent governor of disk type, so that the point of cut-off in each cylinder, ranging from 0.08 to 0.75 stroke, is changed equally with the load. A straight-line separator is placed on the steam pipe leading to the engine. The dry steam only is to enter the cylinder. In addition to this a straight-line greaser extractor is placed on the exhaust pipe leading from the low pressure cylinder to the condenser. Speaking generally, it may be said that these engines show the latest types in use on ocean steamships, with necessary additions to render them as efficient for electric generating purposes as for marine work.

Model Power House.

An unusually interesting power house has recently been constructed at Rochester, N. Y., to utilize the energy of the Genesee falls. The dam is 110 feet high, the water drop of ninety feet. The water had partly undercut a rocky bluff on which the station was to be built, and the overhanging portions were first blasted off. A foundation was then con-

structed with great difficulty, owing to the very rapid current of the river and its habit of rising suddenly. The structure was finally completed, however, and the power plant installed. This consists of two turbines which are 84 inches in diameter, each supplied with 6,250 cubic feet of water a minute under an effective head of 87 feet through a five-foot flume. The wheels are of phosphor bronze with fluted steel blades and each develops 105-horse power. This power is transmitted from a five-foot rope wheel to a twelve-foot rope wheel ninety feet above, through sixteen manilla ropes 1 1/2 inch in diameter. The proper tension on these ropes is obtained by means of a tightener wheel in an adjustable frame. Each wheel has its own flume and gate and can be used separately. The ropes run at a very high speed—7,540 feet a minute—but it was recently stated at a meeting of the American Society of Civil Engineers that no delay had occurred in over a year's use.

Electric Lights in the Country.

An excellent suggestion has been made to meet the convenience of dwellers in parts remote from cities, where the securing of a supply of electricity is attended with more or less difficulty. It is proposed that owners of country houses should generate and distribute their electricity from a central station. At some fixed place, preferably the railway station, an electric station under skilled management should distribute the power at high pressure. The station might also have a telephone exchange. When for an ordinary household, the cost of current would be prohibitive, the high-pressure central station might so reduce the cost as to make an electric supply fully available. A steam or fuel engine would run the generator at low pressure; the current would be transformed up to suitable pressure according to distance. Each householder would be supplied with transformer and meter in the same way as in towns, and a joint stock company might be made to run the station with limitations as to maximum prices.

Underground Wires.

The results of the experiment made by New York city in burying electric wires is summed up by Franklin L. Pope in the Engineering Magazine as follows: It seems to be pretty conclusively established that a commercially satisfactory system of underground wires has been worked out from the past five or six years; that this is far less liable to interruption than any overhead system which can possibly be devised, and that it is less dangerous to human life; while, on the other hand, its first cost is somewhat greater than that of a system of five or six times as much for a given number of points of service—it is in many respects cumbersome and inconvenient, lacking the flexibility and adaptability to different conditions of the ground which are characteristic of the overhead system. The cost of installation is extended to sparsely settled districts, which must either be reached by aerial wires or not at all. The more subway rental of the wires in the Fifth avenue, New York, is said to amount to \$120,000 per year for the use of the excessive cost of the telephone service in New York is in great part due to the same cause—the enormous expense of the underground conductors now used throughout the central districts of the city.

Patent Cyclone Demolisher.

A man out in Denver has patented a great idea. He is intimate with cyclones, having met several in Kansas, and from his acute observation of their characteristics he is persuaded that he can knock out the strong wind by means of a cyclone demolisher. The unopposed west he is willing to bet dollars to doughnuts that he can stop a tornado in one round. His plan is simple enough. A strong iron band passes over the gables and roof of the house to which it is firmly bolted; the ends of the rod terminate in loops which are buried in the ground and carefully tacked down by large wooden stakes, a mallet and the hired man. As a sort of additional precaution a small red flag is attached to the end of the rod, which will be blown by the wind, and a terrifying combination of heavy anchors, sills and beams, which the inventor believes will stand eternally. In addition this amateur reformatory institution has infinite possibilities as a mechanical cyclone demolisher. It is a most intelligent agriculturist.

A Virginia Idea.

What is more innocent in appearance than a clothes brush with a heavy wooden back and stiff bristles? Who would think that it contained a pint of good Bourbon? Yet this combination of good and evil was the culmination of a Virginia inventor's concentration upon the liquor question. His brush, patented a few days ago, has a thick hollow back, which contains a glass flask securely concealed from view, with a drinking cup fitted snugly to the rear end of the brush. The flask is attached to the brush in such a manner that the flask taken out and refilled. Down in Virginia now every one is supposed to have at least one brush, and prohibitionists three.

Steam Hammer on Shipboard.

A steam hammer is a tool generally regarded as requiring a specially solid foundation, so the announcement that one is in use on board a ship is calculated to arouse considerable interest. The ship Defense, of the British navy, which is a kind of floating machine shop, has recently been fitted with such a tool. Special construction was of course necessary to meet the requirements of its surroundings. The hammer is of the overhanging form, with two standards, in which are the planned guides, and between which the trip is placed. It weighs 836 pounds and has a maximum stroke of seventeen inches. The hammer is fitted with both self-acting and hand valve gear and has been designed to work very quickly or slowly, as directed. The heavy block of iron, made in one massive casting of great weight, so as to cause a little vibration as the ship in the surrounding parts is flexed under the action of the hammer. It is said to be the first tool of the kind ever constructed on board ship.

Another Edison Idea.

Thomas A. Edison has obtained a patent on the generation of the electric current which may lead eventually to the solution of the problem of generating electricity from combustion. Edison's method consists substantially in generating electricity in a heated chamber, exhausted of air, from the reaction of carbon with a chemical compound, the nature of which is not yet disclosed, but which is said to be a perfluorinated carbon and a carbon rod. Much may be expected from this latest invention of the "Wizard of Menlo Park" if his chemical is a cheap

one. The device very certainly embodies new principles.

High Speed Trains.

The celebrated inventor, Zepherowicz, is said to still cling to the idea of running cars between Vienna and Budapest at speeds from 125 to 150 miles per hour. He estimates that 800-horse power will be required for a loaded car weighing about sixty tons. The cars are to be driven by electric motors using 600 amperes at a pressure of 1,000 volts. For the generation and transmission of the electric current it is proposed to establish two large power stations, each of thirty-seven miles distant from the termini, and to use aerial transmitting lines. Even if the capital for this gigantic experiment can be found, which is unlikely, and concessions obtained, there is a considerable element of uncertainty as to 800-horse power propelling sixty tons at a speed of 150 miles an hour. It is certain, moreover, that the projected line cannot pay in competition with existing railways.

Long-Distance Telephoning.

While the cost of telephoning conversations in the States is quite moderate, writes Franklin L. Pope in the Engineering Magazine, it must not be forgotten that the correspondents are enjoying for a limited time the exclusive use of a plant which has cost an enormous amount of money. Moreover, the amount of matter that can be transmitted by telephone under favorable conditions in the space of five minutes allowed is surprising. By the aid of a stenographer 600 to 800 words have been got through during that time, which is nearly as fast as graphing, to say nothing of the obvious advantages realized in many cases.

North Galveston's Streets.

NORTH GALVESTON, TEX., March 11.—Good streets are a condition of permanency here, and the city fathers are not likely to let the failure of a congress to repeal the Sherman silver act has not so much disturbed foreign confidence in our investments as has been feared. The large real estate purchases have been of gold-bearing securities, but that discrimination implies that the misgivings among foreign investors apply to other securities, and not to the investments connected with silver, because the Sherman act makes it possible for foreigners to take freely the latter class of investments until the country has protected itself against the possibility of inflation. The Sherman act is a danger, but it is something to have these evidences of a willingness to take securities legally payable in gold; for, after all, the bill, if passed, would make it possible to expressly payable in that form of money. To this extent we are protected against immediate returns of securities to the home market, and an assured outlet for our securities in periods of depression or disturbance on this side the Atlantic.

Exports Have Grown Improved.

Another point of improvement in the situation is the increase in the value of exports of products. The large shipments of gold have been largely caused by the lightness of the exports of produce since the end of the year. The large shipments have been due to a surplus of commodities for shipment; on the contrary, the "visible supply" of wheat and corn exceeds that of the year. The surplus of wheat is the result of a crop of 180. The accumulation of grain is due to our market being held in speculation above the European level. The surplus of produce is the result of a similar cause. It is only a question of time when speculative prices will be brought down to the European level of values, and the tendency in money and the caution among lenders may be expected to apply that computation. While there is no reason to expect that the next few weeks we shall stand exposed to the export of more gold, yet the reasons responsible for the large shipments of gold have been lessened by exports from this extraordinary surplus of products. Under all the circumstances, therefore, it is likely to be a quiet year for our exports of specie during the last two months in a large measure anticipatory of the quiet year for our exports of specie during the last two months. The market falling off in the spring months, the export of securities to London, to the revival of the shipments of produce, and to the advancing rates of interest on this market. The quiet year will be marked by the export of securities to London, to the revival of the shipments of produce, and to the advancing rates of interest on this market.

Some Matters Unsettled.

All the financial matters which show that the period of violent disturbance has passed its climax, and that a reaction has set in towards more normal conditions, and these matters are unsettled. The recovery of the tone of business at the Stock exchange. There are, however, factors yet undetermined which may be expected to hold the improvement in the market for an indefinite period. Among these may be mentioned the uncertainty as to whether the regular period of the next session before the regular period to deal with certain specially urgent questions, and the absence from President Cleveland's cabinet of the man whose name is mentioned as to what measures he would favor or condemn in respect to silver, bank currency, the treasury gold reserve and the tariff. It is probable that the president will deem such specific references as suitable for an address of congress rather than in a declaration to the people at large; but it is evident something of the nature of that which no light has come from the chief magistrate as to what form of legislation may be expected in the near future. The condition of large material interests. The current flow of currency to the interior has not been generally expected and has been irregularly moderate. The speculative holders of stocks. The current rates of exchange at the west show that the outflow is due to legitimate trade causes, however unusual for the season, and not to speculative holders of stocks. The current rates of exchange at the west show that the outflow is due to legitimate trade causes, however unusual for the season, and not to speculative holders of stocks. The current rates of exchange at the west show that the outflow is due to legitimate trade causes, however unusual for the season, and not to speculative holders of stocks.

Markets Influenced by the Situation in the United States—Other Features.

LONDON, March 11.—Discount rates were firm during the past week for 1 1/2 for three months and 2 for six. The financial situation in the United States is the leading influence that affects the money and stock markets. High class investment stocks and home and Indian funds have been especially affected by the talk of probable borrowing by the United States. There is a consensus of opinion here now that the negotiations in that direction have been tentative and provisional, and that the United States will tide over the temporary difficulty which will be done in a momentary policy has been adopted, especially as Austria's demands have lessened. Silver was quiet during the week. The market was to some extent supported by the small amount of silver which was sold on the exchange was extremely inactive. The market seemed asleep, and even brokers of the highest standing complained of an absence of interest. The market for the week closed with a decline of one-fourth point for the week. 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