

AN EXPERT ELECTRIC TRIAL.

The National Commission That is Considering the Subway Problem.

THEIR PROPOSED METHODS OF WORK.

Three Men of Note—Prof. Rowland's Scientific Work and Mr. Rosewater's Engineering Record—Lieut. Shunk's Career.

Engineers and municipalities all over the world are watching with interest for the publication of the report of the committee appointed last fall by the president in pursuance to an act of congress regarding the best systems of underground conduits and subways, says the Washington Star.

This committee is composed of three members—Mr. Andrew Rosewater, Prof. Henry A. Rowland and Lieutenant Francis Rowan Shunk of the engineering corps, U. S. Army.

Although appointed in October, 1890, an account of the other professional engagements of the commissioners no meeting was held until January 4, 1891. At this meeting Mr. Andrew Rosewater was elected president and Lieutenant Shunk secretary.

A plan of campaign was then adopted as follows: To inquire into the practicability of putting all kinds of electric wires underground.

To ascertain the existing state of affairs in Washington; the location of underground and overhead wires; the franchises of the various companies; systems now used by them; working of these systems, etc.

In this connection it was necessary to investigate many collateral subjects, such as street railways, sewers, etc.

To ascertain the existing state of things in other cities, their experience as to systems used and regulations found necessary.

Then again to examine the various projects for subways; to compare the conduits, cables, etc., now in the market and to select the best.

As the subject is comparatively new these investigations involved a great deal of work. The board has thus far obtained the opinions of the best electrical authorities in Europe and America, and has corresponded with the governments of the leading cities.

In Prof. Rowland's report, the following are some of the highest authorities on all electrical matters.

At the present time the correspondence is practically finished. There is a vast amount of information to be classified, condensed and digested. This is already partially done, and the board has formed a general idea of the best system for the city. This will probably require a great deal of modification and adjustment before it is all fit in every particular.

The board will then proceed to write its report. There will be maps embodied in the report and a draughtsman has been employed several months on this work.

The utmost harmony prevails amongst the members of the board. Apart from the deliberative and the executive, which are equally shared each revolves in its own peculiar orbit.

Prof. Rowland, the electrician of the Johns Hopkins university, holds high rank in his profession. What he does not know about electricity is considered as absolutely not worth knowing.

Mr. Rosewater, a municipal engineer of much experience, is supposed to think in terms of slopes, concrete, cost of brick work, etc. Being executive officer of the board he presides at all meetings.

The military member of the commission, Lieutenant Shunk, is a man of high standing and importance of the board, even though he is the junior member. He is a thorough electrician and has a marvelous faculty of evoking order out of chaos. Under his management a comprehensible mass of papers marshals itself in sets of four—companies and battalions.

He can solve the most difficult problems in mathematics, and fully sustains his third of the board.

Below will be found portraits of the members of the commission, with a brief biographical sketch of each.

Mr. Andrew Rosewater was born October 18, 1845, and educated in the common schools of Cleveland, O. In 1864 he secured employment upon the engineer corps which was sent out to make surveys and explorations of the Rocky mountain region. View of determining upon a practicable route for the Pacific railway. In 1866 he staked out the first mile of track on the Union Pacific road and soon after was appointed inspector of ties and bridge material of the road, with headquarters at Omaha.

In the spring of 1867 he was assigned to the engineer corps selected to make a special exploration and survey of the Rocky mountain region, in order to select the best possible crossing for the road.

This, at this time, aside from the difficult engineering features, was a hazardous undertaking. The party was harassed by Indians at every turn, three men being killed within the first three months. In August the chief engineer, Perry T. Brown, was himself killed while trying to make a party from an ambuscade. The corps, however, continued with its work until winter set in. The party was then disbanded and Mr. Rosewater, with two others, was selected to prepare the maps, profiles and estimates of the 300 miles of line embraced in their surveys of the season.

In the following spring Mr. Rosewater was appointed assistant city engineer of Omaha. Shortly after he published his first detailed map of Douglas county, and in addition to his other office of county surveyor. In 1869 he was promoted to the position of city engineer, and continued in that position until 1874, when he resigned. A few months, till the spring of 1874. He then engaged in journalistic work, serving at times both as business manager and editor of the Omaha Daily Bee.

In 1875 he resumed the engineering profession and was engaged for nearly two years as engineer in charge of construction of the new gold mine in the Omaha, Minnesota & St. Paul railway. In 1880 he opened up a private engineering office at Omaha, and was shortly after engaged as resident engineer in charge of construction of the Omaha water works. In the following year he was tendered the position of city engineer of the city of Omaha, which he accepted. Under his administration the city was wonderfully improved. Mr. Rosewater resigned his position in order to enter upon the larger field of consulting engineer and municipal public works, making sewerage designing a specialty. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and was the first president of the Nebraska Association of Engineers and Surveyors.

Prof. Henry A. Rowland graduated from Troy University, N. Y., in 1870. In 1874 he was appointed to a railroad in western New York, but gave that up to take the position of professor at Worcester university. In 1875 he returned to Rensselaer institute as instructor in physics, and in 1874 became a professor at the Johns Hopkins university at Baltimore, Md., where he has since remained.

He has been one of the chief of physics and became director of the physics laboratory Prof. Rowland, with his already recognized ability, was chosen for the place. This was a year before the university of actuality opened, and the interval he spent in Europe, investigating in Berlin with Helmholtz. Here he investigated the effect of static electricity in motion and proved that a moving charge has the effect of a current.

While the energies of Prof. Rowland have been largely devoted to the study of electricity and magnetism, his work takes a broad sweep through pretty well the whole range of physics.

The well-earned degree of Ph. D. was conferred upon Prof. Rowland by Johns Hopkins university in 1880. He has also received a honorary degree from the same university at a special congress at Paris in 1881 and of the jury at the electrical exhibition at the same time and place he received the order of a chevalier of the Legion of Honor. In 1884 he was elected a member of the National academy of sciences. In 1885 he presided over the physics section of the American association for the advancement of science at Minneapolis and read a memorable address, entitled "A Plea for Pure Science." In 1884, being appointed by the government as the physicist specially formed for the purpose, he presided over the national conference of electricians at Philadelphia. During the same year he received from the American Association of Arts and Sciences, of which he is an associate, the Rumford medal for his researches.

He is corresponding member for the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, is one of the twelve foreign members of the Physical Society of London, a foreign member of the Royal society and is a permanent

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Now the public is interested in this matter in this way, that these same men are leaders in the independent party, and are basing their political position and their profiting therefrom on the order to serve their own political ambition. As I have before said, if such a thing were to be done, they would be bound to reform our political institutions, and they seem to have done so before then. But they say that if I or others have any complaints of this sort to make, we must first pay a prefer charge within the order and not go before the public. Now I will admit in a general way that a man ought not to air his dirty linen on the street corners, and I would care where our order, ourselves and our money are being unlawfully used to encompass our political ends, but I do not think we have a right to protest in the order or out of it and that with all our might, and our efforts are not properly to be termed "mud-slinging."

It is further to be noted that the order itself is not in accord with a majority of our brethren who should quietly withdraw, and who are doing so, and who are doing so and declared purposes the alliance is non-partisan. Now if the majority will so change the constitution as to permit them to do law, they will have to be satisfied with the order for one will quickly get out of the way, but we do not propose either to be crowded out or to be forced to do anything that we do not want to do. The rights of majorities, or less sacred than the rights of minorities, or small minorities. Majorities, or, should be subject to law, and I am sure that the opinion very generally prevalent that majorities are above all law, and so they seek to do this sort of thing, and they are doing so in the case of the independent party that evening, I mildly advised him to experiment on them which he did—rather, they experimented on him.

We began playing at the same table. I wondered a little, when he made a bid of twelve on a lone five spot, and when in the next hand he drew a royal flush, and an ace down on his partner's king, leaving