

THE FIELD OF ELECTRICITY

Instructive Review of the Progress of Electrical Industries.

INCREASED DEMAND AND REDUCED COST

Gigantic Business Interests Developed in a Decade—Electric Railroad on Stills—Power from Car Axles.

A good deal of instructive information about the progress of electrical industries in this country is to be had from the report written by Dr. A. E. Kennelly for the current Cassiers. The doctor is president of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, and it is a fair presumption that he is qualified to talk on the subject. Inasmuch as the principal progress in electrical engineering has been confined to the last fifteen years, and as there is now something like \$1,500,000,000 invested in electrical applications in this country, the topic is a distinctly modern one and of commanding importance.

Beginning with dynamo electricity, Kennelly points out that at the time of the Philadelphia electrical show in 1884 a machine that had an output of fifty kilowatts—a kilowatt is equivalent to about one and a third horsepower—was a big one. At the present time a generator having a capacity of 5,000 kilowatts is being built. Compared with 1882, the cost of a dynamo today is about one-tenth for the same capacity. In regard to "efficiency," it is to be observed that little improvement has been possible for fifteen years.

The machine exhibited in Philadelphia yielded in the form of electricity 92 per cent of the mechanical energy used to drive them. Such dynamos would be considered excellent machines at the present time, though an efficiency of 95 per cent is sometimes attained. Owing, however, to better design, ten watts is now got out of a dynamo for every pound of weight today, whereas in 1884 only six watts were secured.

In calculating the cost of generating electricity, engineers start with the kilowatt for the period of an hour. Fifteen years ago the minimum cost was 7.5 cents a kilowatt-hour under the most favorable circumstances. Now, for large electric railway systems, current is sometimes supplied for 1.5 cents. The power from Niagara is sold in Buffalo for 2 cents to 2-3 of a cent, according to the amount consumed.

Reduced Cost. Incandescent lamps cost about \$1 fifteen years ago, but can now be had for 15 cents. The quality of the lamp has been much improved, too, in the meantime. Arc lights were already almost perfect in 1884, but the cost of the carbons has been reduced to one-third of what it was then, and the "incandescent arc," by prolonging the life of the pencils from eight to ten hours to one hundred or one hundred and fifty still further promotes economy. Up to the present time not far from \$600,000,000 has been invested in electric lighting enterprises in the United States.

Storage batteries were in use in 1884 to some extent, but at that time it was possible to put in a maximum charge of only 3-4 watt-hours to a pound of plates, and even then only 65 per cent of the charge could be drawn off before renewal became necessary. Now, by prolonging the life of the watt-hours per pound, but had the efficiency has been increased to 85 per cent. Less than eleven years have elapsed since the first successful trolley road was put in operation and now there are about fourteen thousand miles of track on which electric traction is employed.

Water Power. Power developed by waterfalls is now transmitted in the form of electricity to distances everywhere from two to eighty-five miles and the total amount now thus sent over wires is about 150,000 kilowatts, or 200,000 horsepower. For transmission purposes the alternating current system is used, because it can be transformed from a low pressure or voltage to a high one economically and it is far cheaper to send electricity over wire at high voltages than low ones.

Novel Electric Railroad. The oft-proposed scheme of an electric aerial railway, by which the passengers could be shot through the air at a high rate of speed in a car suspended on a cable, is now being worked out in a German road between Elberfeld and Barmen. Of all electric roads yet built or building this is certainly the most unique, surpassing the impractical "amphibious" line at Brighton and the Hopton aerial tramway at Longport. Elevated electric lines have become quite common during the last three years, but the idea of suspending the car from an overhead framework instead of allowing it to run upon it is startlingly radical and a construction not calculated to inspire courage in the hearts of timid travelers, despite the fact that it is claimed to be quite as safe as the ordinary method of running cars on elevated systems.

Local circumstances are such, however, that the only available route for the road was over the bed of the River Wupper, a connecting link between the two towns. At

first it was suggested that single pillars be erected in the center of the stream and an elevated platform be erected thereon upon which to lay tracks. This, however, would have resulted in obstructing the river channel and was not feasible, owing to tides and heights of bridges, etc. Finally the suspended aerial system shown in the illustration was adopted.

Two inclined girders of structural steel, placed as shown and supported on specially prepared foundations, are located in the river's banks. These are spaced along the banks sixty to sixty-five feet apart and held in position by means of a series of beams and trusses, to which the rails are attached. This construction is followed throughout nearly the entire eight miles of the road. The height is considerably greater than that of the ordinary elevated road, as the bottoms of the cars sixteen feet above the bridges are to be crossed. Each car seats from fifty to sixty people, and is reached by means of iron stairways leading up to a platform. These cars, as before stated, are hung from two rails, the axes of the wheels being supported on movable trunnions, which permits of rapid propulsion and yet ease in taking curves.

The selection of electricity as the motive power is a foregone conclusion, as no other form of power is so well adapted to the peculiar requirements imposed by this very rapid construction. Feasibility of operation, ease of control and absence of flying dirt all being of importance to the successful operation of the system. Twenty-five miles an hour is the contemplated speed. Every possible precaution has been taken to prevent any accident, and the fact that the car has become disabled, no serious accidents would follow.

Power from Car Axles. The introduction of the axle electric light system in the service of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railway running between Chicago and Los Angeles marks a radical departure from previous practice, which necessitated a large electric light plant in the baggage car.

The power under the new system is taken from the car axle. The leading features of the apparatus consist of a dynamo operated from the axle and a storage battery which supplements the direct work of the dynamo in operation, and for charging, when the car is at rest or moving at a slow speed.

The belt which connects the driving pulley with the countershaft and dynamo pulleys is made of camel hair. It is eight feet eleven inches long and three and one-half inches wide and is the only kind of belt that will stand the varying effects of rain, snow and ice, and which will adapt itself to all conditions. Though not an endless belt, it is made practically so by an upturned joint clamped between steel washers in such a fashion that no matter what comes in contact with the pulleys.

The dynamo is of a high grade of construction and the brushes are good for 30,000 miles. Conductors and brakemen can operate the switchboard, so that no skilled laborer is employed in the operation of the car. The low operating expenses are the main features claimed for this system. While the cars are running the light is taken direct from the dynamo and when standing still or going at less than eight miles an hour the light is automatically taken from the storage battery. At all times the lamps are steady and brilliant.

There are four trains in the Santa Fe limited which run from Chicago to Los Angeles. Each of these trains is equipped with an observation compartment, car, three sleeping cars and a baggage car. The equipment includes lights in all the berths, making this the first train in the world carrying such a large supply of light service exclusively from the car axles.

When the intention of lighting the locomotive headlight from the axle service is made, it is possible to use less weight or the power required. It is due largely to the introduction of soft-steel in the manufacture of motors. The capital now locked up in electric roads in America is estimated at \$1,000,000,000, and this one industry employs one hundred and seventy thousand men.

Electric Notes. According to President Tuttle of the Boston and Maine railroad, steam road must abandon suburban traffic within a radius of six miles from the center of our cities. Within this radius the trolley lines have decided advantages. The latter can make profits on smaller fares because they are not obliged to give the steam roads pay for the use of their terminals and other wayside business at least cost. But there is a future for steam roads beyond the six-mile limit, and lower fares might perhaps improve their receipts within that radius.

Gas logs are made nowadays in various sizes and with the imitation hickory log of which they are formed piled in various shapes. The gas log is designed as a slightly and convenient means of giving heat. There is an imitation electric grate fire that is intended for ornamental purposes only. This fire is composed of pieces of ruby and amber glass. The grate, standing in a fireplace in the usual manner, has within it an incandescent light, over which is placed a wire cage at such a height in the grate that the coal, that is the ruby and amber glass, when spread over it is brought up to the height of an ordinary coal fire. The cage protects the burner, makes a thin layer of glass sufficient and holds the glass up so that the light from below can shine through it all and give it the appearance of the coal fire. It is made to represent the light is turned on and off and the fire thus lighted or put out by turning a key in the usual manner, this key being located conveniently by the side of the fireplace. The electric grate is used usually in rooms where steam is used for heating.

Long and Short Men Double Up. A double "long and short" man has gone into the highway robbery business. They made their first appearance as knights of the road Wednesday night.

B. B. Boomer, a street in the city, was held up by the quartet Wednesday at the mouth of the Thirtieth street car line. They got a watch and \$10 from him. The men, two of whom are described as being very tall, the others being below the medium stature, were armed with revolvers and wore masks. They sprang from behind a clump of trees and attacked Boomer.

SAYING GOODBYE TO OMAHA

President McKinley Finds it Hard to Start After His Reception.

PLEASANT WORDS OF FAREWELL SPOKEN

Note to General Manderson and Speech to the Crowd at the Depot Indicated the President's Feeling.

THE OMAHA CLUB.

Dear General Manderson: Before I go, permit me to thank you, My visit to Omaha has been of uncommon interest and pleasure. Goodbye.

WILLIAM MCKINLEY. Oct. 13, 1898.

The above note was written by President McKinley under the apprehension that he might not meet General Manderson personally. He afterward gave it to Mr. Manderson, who thought it should be given to the public, and will give it to the Omaha Public Library, to be placed in the collection of autograph letters of prominent men. "I thank you more than words can tell for your kindness to me during my visit to your city and your magnificent exhibition of patriotism throughout the country. I am glad to have seen Omaha and to have seen the people ever loyal to good government and dear to the old flag. It is very hard for me to say goodbye to Omaha; you have all made my trip so delightful. But I must say goodbye now, as the train is about to leave. May the stars and stripes of our country be ever seen through the whole land, the people ever loyal to good government and dear to the old flag. It is very hard for me to say goodbye to Omaha; you have all made my trip so delightful. 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