

Events in Field of Electricity

Telephone Competition.
CHICAGO adheres are undergoing a prolonged siege on the problem of telephone franchises. The Bell company has a monopoly of the field, but its franchise is expiring and an extension of twenty years is sought with all the energy and persuasive power which a good thing inspires. A company organized by the Illinois Manufacturers' association also seeks a franchise and offers to do business at a rate much lower than the present company, besides agreeing to pay a percentage of the profits into the city treasury. Rival promoters are criticizing and condemning each other with great vigor and volubility, at the same time professing undying love for the "dear people." Some day an author who appreciates a good thing will acquire fame and fortune by gathering these and similar effusions and print a book of "Love Letters of Corporations to the People." The "best sellers" of today would be out-classed tomorrow.

The Manufacturers' Telephone company filed a bond for \$1,000,000 with the council committee on gas, oil and electric light as a guarantee that it will carry out the provisions of the franchise it is seeking from the city.

At the same time it prepared a statement showing how it will be able to pay 11 per cent on an investment of \$13,000,000, and still give the city a much less expensive service and with a more modern plant than that offered by the Chicago Telephone company.

John M. Glenn, secretary of the Illinois Manufacturers' association, made this statement to the committee:

"On a basis of 150,000 telephones the investment was estimated by one expert at \$15,000,000 and by the other expert at \$15,000,000. The estimated cost of operation, depreciation and maintenance, including \$150,000 for the payment of interest at the rate of 5 per cent on \$15,000,000, was fixed by one expert at \$4,487,400 and by another at \$4,222,000. Both experts have agreed on the amount of gross revenue, based on the amount estimated by the association, at \$3,122,000. The net revenue after the payment of 5 per cent on the investment ranges from \$248,600 to \$211,000, according to the two experts."

Under the original contract by which the Chicago Telephone company, operating in northern Illinois, obtained its lease from the American Telephone and Telegraph company, owing to the patents of the Bell Telephone company all the telephone instruments remain the property of the lessee and provision is made that the lessee shall charge its subscribers such rental and royalty as the parent concern shall fix from time to time. The sum for the use of call bells, batteries, wires and other appliances.

Provision is made for 50 per cent of the telephone rental and royalty to be paid to the parent company. Under subsequent contracts the local company is allowed but 15 per cent of the rental and distance messages, provided that the sum in each instance shall not exceed 10 cents. A commission by similar amount is allowed from the public telephone call receipts.

Under these contracts the American Telephone and Telegraph company, which also owns the Western Electric company, which furnishes the supplies for the so-called local concern, has absolute control of the telephone situation in Chicago. The rates are really fixed by P. P. Fish, president of the American Telephone and Telegraph company, who lives in Boston.

Commercial account. He was a discoverer of carbide of calcium, now being manufactured throughout the chief countries of the world. He never even patented his process, communicating it, indeed, for the common benefit to the Paris Comptes Rendus for publication. Another worker in the same field is Mr. E. G. Acheson, who is chiefly responsible for the industrial utilization of the Niagara Falls. He discovered a new commercial product which he named "carborundum," now almost universally in use as an abrasive, and he also introduced the process of electrically manufacturing artificial graphite. Mr. Acheson has recently described his discovery of carborundum before the Sibley College of Mechanical Engineering as follows:

"I mixed together a quantity of clay and powdered rocks, and placed the mixture in an iron bowl such as plumbers use for holding their melted solder. Into this mixture I inserted one end of an electric lamp carbon, the other end being connected to one lead from a dynamo, the other lead being attached to the iron bowl. A strong current was sent through the mixture under the partial vacuum of the clay was thoroughly melted. When cold the mass was removed and examined carefully. Adhering to the end of the carbon rod I noticed a very few small bright specks. With difficulty I secured one, and placing it in the end of a lead pencil drew across it a piece of glass. It not only scratched but cut the glass. I had found the rough, uncut gem."

Mr. Acheson, however, patented his processes everywhere. Works for his production of carborundum have been established on the continent, but the material is not produced in this country.

Gossip About Noted People

Wellman's Cold Feet.
THOSE ancient days Walter Wellman, even then a hunter after the north pole, was one of the most assiduous of the players that assembled every night in the poker room of the Press club, relates the New York Telegraph. Mr. Wellman was ever a cautious player and it was the irritated and annoyed Colonel Sterrett who spread continuously the rumor that Mr. Wellman was a man who could be easily induced to quit the game when his stack of chips had grown to respectable proportions. Colonel Sterrett declared that he had made a list of the excuses offered by Mr. Wellman for breaking away from the game while still a winner, and that Mr. Wellman had never repeated himself.

It was while Mr. Wellman was preparing for one of his annual dashes for the pole that he met Colonel Sterrett in Shoemaker's and insisted on telling at great length of the preparations he had made for resisting the Arctic cold. Quite a little crowd gathered and listened attentively. Then Colonel Sterrett spoke:

"Walter, you have told us with great circumstantiality of the method to be adopted by you to prevent your face being frozen. I said Colonel Sterrett: 'That is the last thing that concerns us. What we want to know, Walter, is how in God's name you are going to keep your feet warm?'"

A Rise and Fall.
President Roosevelt, in his impulsive way, sent for a well-known young writer and asked abruptly: "Do you know Spanish?" "No, Mr. President, I do not. I very much regret to say," was the reply. "I am sorry to hear it," commented the chief magistrate, and the subject was dropped. The young man went away deeply impressed with the idea that had he known Spanish, he might have been appointed to a high office in the diplomatic corps, so he set to work assiduously, dropping everything else, and soon acquired a proficiency in that language. The other day he called at the White House and was cordially welcomed. In the course of conversation he said: "By the way, Mr. President, I know Spanish well; I both talk and read it with ease." "Oh, you don't say so?" was the president's reply; "then you ought to be one of the happiest men in the world; you can read 'Don Quixote' in the original."

Laffan and His Paids.
An old friend in Washington of W. M. Laffan, who succeeded Charles A. Dana as the master spirit of the New York Sun, says in the Washington Herald that Mr. Laffan came to the United States from Ireland, he first lived in San Francisco, and worked there as a reporter—and a good one he was, too. It was then Mr. Laffan's ambition to found a high-class weekly newspaper in Washington, believing that he could achieve more fame as the editor of that sort of journal than any other. That was more than thirty years ago. Among those who worked with him in San Francisco was Ambrose Bierce, the author and satirist. Even that far back in his career in this country, Mr. Laffan was a collector of rare pictures, and gravings, and kept himself constantly poor by putting all of his extra earnings into pictures. He came east with the determination to start a weekly newspaper in Washington, but did not succeed in raising sufficient capital. He was successful, however, in securing capital enough to found an evening newspaper in Baltimore, which he conducted for a short time, and then went on the Sun in New York. It is said that if he had not spent so large a part of his Baltimore paper's earnings on pictures, he would have built up in that city a journal of great influence. It is believed that Mr. Laffan has more money invested in pictures and engravings than has even J. Pierpont Morgan.

Monorail to Coney Island.
The New York Rapid Transit Commission's committee on plans held a public hearing the other day on the application which has been made by F. B. Behr for a franchise to build a monorail railroad between Brooklyn and Coney Island. Mr. Behr explained to the committee that the system he proposed would begin at the ferry at the foot of Atlantic avenue, run out Atlantic avenue and to Coney Island by way of Rogers and Nostrand avenues. He has planned another line running out Third avenue by way of East Broadway to the two moking a loop, so that passengers could go out to Coney Island one way and back the other. The Behr monorail is a high speed, elevated, electric railroad. The cars run upon a single rail, having the wheels in the center of the cars and straddling the rail as a saddle sits on a horse. The rail is elevated about six feet above the ground, or the structure on which the roadbed rests, and the sides of the cars extend below the rail. This brings the center of gravity below the rail so that there is no danger of the car upsetting. Mr. Behr promised to maintain an average speed of sixty-five miles an hour on his Coney Island line, including stops. At the official trial of his railroad for the British government at Brussels, he maintained a speed of ninety miles an hour on a three-mile track and carried passengers at that speed. Ex-Bridge Commissioner Lindenthal, Joseph Ramsey, Jr., former president of the Washakie railroad, and other engineers informed the committee that Mr. Behr's system was a feasible and safe method of transportation.

Commoners With Hats On.
A member may wear his hat in the House of Commons so long as he is sitting, but the moment he rises he must uncover; and, of course, no one remains covered when he addresses the chair. But here is one of those paradoxes that make the house always so delightfully interesting and its rules so unlike those of any other legislative body, relates Appleton's magazine. When the house is dividing and a member desires to raise a point of order, the rules require that he must "speak sitting and covered."

On one occasion Mr. Gladstone raised a point of order for the moment forgot the rule. No sooner did he begin to speak than the house shouted at him "Hat! hat!" Every cabinet member has a private room

Young Lawyers at Court.
The youngest lawyer that ever appeared before the supreme court of the United States the other day argued in favor of the constitutionality of the North Carolina statute prohibiting the running of "bucket shops" in that state. He was Walter Clark, Jr., son of Chief Justice Clark of the supreme court of North Carolina, and he has just passed his twenty-first birthday. The rules of the supreme court require that an applicant shall have had three years' practice before the highest court of his state before being eligible to admission, and as young Clark necessarily could not have this experience a special motion was necessary to enable him to appear. Young Clark, beardless and in appearance only a youth, seemed not the least bit like the highest tribunal in the land.

Red Necktie Spoils Elopement.
WHEN Miss Julia Tompense of Waterbury, Conn., crocheted the most lurid red necktie that ever graced the neck of a Waterbury Adonis and worked in a number of pretty sentimental inscriptions upon its dainty folds, she little thought that the same necktie would shatter her hopes of an elopement.

Albeit, Vernice, the young woman's fiancée, has neither a red tie nor a wife today and is awaiting someone to appear in the court house to go on his bond for \$100. He is charged with abduction.

Miss Tompense's father, fearing an elopement when she wanted to go to New York, insisted on accompanying her to the station. The young couple had everything arranged, so when Vernice saw the father with the girl he hid in a freight car until the New York train was just starting. Then he made a running jump and landed on the rear platform.

When the young couple arrived in New York the bride-to-be discovered that Ver-

Nerve Falls at the Altar.
Walking at the hurdle, Max Schpel, husband-to-be, and Rose Belmont, bride-elect, got a potent improved, and turned back for another trial gallop, halter free, before leaving the gilded barrier into the pit strown field of matrimony. Their nerve failed on the very steps of the altar. Concluding that the best way to be happy, they returned the license and called it off.

It was a pity, too. Max had been carrying the fatal number thirteen in his pocket for weeks and weeks—ever since October 1, as a matter of fact—before he mustered up the courage to tell Rose that she was to marry him. Expressing some surprise, Rose fell into his arms, wrapped a little on his shoulder, and began planning how to furnish the fat.

Then the invitations were issued. Down in the bakery on the corner a three-layer frosted chocolate cake was in course of construction, relatives had purchased much rice and all of Max's bachelor friends congratulated him, and all his married ones had silently grasped his hand and murmured their sympathy.

Then one night Max called on Rose to talk it over. They sat at opposite ends of the horse hair sofa, built "nests" de wahl, and the light was turned low and the gas log sputtered in quiet meditation. Neither said much; both were thinking hard, and it made Max feel sad.

Then Max said, hesitatingly: "Say, Rose—"

Rose, sobbing, said: "Yes, Max."

So they decided not to try it yet awhile, at least until they had accumulated more courage.

Number Four at Ninety-Four.
The oldest man in Wichita, Kan., has added to his distinction by extending his titles to include that of "the oldest bridegroom" of the city. He is Henry L. Grey of No. 132 North Wichita street. The bride is Sarah Oldfield, also of Wichita. They were married at the West side Presbyterian church. Mr. Grey is 94 years old and his wife 85.

Mr. Grey is of fine physique, five feet nine inches tall, weighs about 200 pounds, has gray hair and eyes, and a full, flowing white beard.

Mr. Grey has been married four times. The first three of his wives are dead. On March 25, 1822, he married Lucy Barrows, from near New Haven, Conn. Of this

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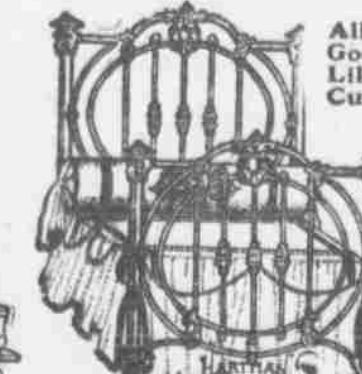
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union three children, all girls, were born in 1854 he married Beattie Sausberry in New York. Of this union one child, a boy, was born. In 1883 Mr. Grey married Kate Anderson, a St. Louis woman. They had no children. She died in Wichita in January of the present year.

Mr. Grey was engaged in the retail boot and shoe business in Chicago in 1871, and lost all his records in the disastrous fire. He says that he and Abraham Lincoln were close friends and that they visited together often at the White House after Mr. Lincoln was elected president.

"Time has been very kind to Mr. Grey. On his cheeks there is the ruddy glow of robust health; in his eye there is yet the gleam of ambition and determination; in his step there is the alacrity not seen in many men of five and sixty. His voice is very good; he can read headlines in newspapers without glasses. He is a great reader and takes an active interest in current events, and voted a mixed ticket at the last election."

Bride Was Superstitious.
The marriage of a St. Louis couple was postponed for the oddest of reasons the other day. The man who almost became a bridegroom was George O. Miller, superintendent of the directory department of the St. Louis postoffice, and the near bride was Miss Olga Koerber. They postponed the wedding indefinitely because Miss Koerber

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Halked on the Altar.
Misses Elizabeth and Jennie Kurich, sisters of Alumn Hank, Pa., with Howard Nimschauer of Pleasantville, Pa., and M. A. Roudsbaugh of Rainsburg, Pa., arrived at Cumberland, Md., to get married. The prospective bridegroom procured a minister. Then they were astonished to hear one of the sisters abruptly declare: "I am not going to get married for two years," to which her sister agreed.

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