

BY THE WAY.

WHEN old timers in various departments of the electrical business get together, they are apt to indulge in reminiscences of an interesting character. The old telegraph man by way of illustrating the resourcefulness of the pioneers, will tell how a stove pipe was once utilized to make contact between the ends of a broken wire when nothing better adapted to the purpose was in sight, and how to everybody's surprise it did its duty nobly and well. Another will describe the first insulated office wire as having a covering of hemp and red sealing wax. At this point the electric light man will probably start in to prove that expensive insulation is not as necessary for the prevention of fires as it is supposed to be. By way of experiment he once put up a number of 52 volt incandescent lamps on bare wires placed in contact with wood, then turned on the hose and no fire resulted. The electric light man believes, and there appears to be ground for his opinion, that the fire underwriters' regulations governing the method of wiring, should take the voltage into account. He also thinks that it should be made permissible it not compulsory, as in England, to ground secondary wires, to prevent trouble from contact. These and many other subjects of equal interest engage the attention of the old timers when by chance they meet.

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"An odd institution that has lately come under my notice," said a friend of mine the other day, "is the railway, twelve miles in length, between Grenville and Carillon on the Ottawa river. This railway is employed for the transport of passengers and baggage coming by steamer from Montreal to Ottawa and vice versa. The train, which consists of a locomotive and one car, makes only one trip per day, leaving Carillon on the arrival of the boat from Montreal, and on the return, leaving Grenville on arrival of the steamer from Ottawa. The line runs through fields some distance from the river. The roadbed and rails cannot be seen except at close range, being overgrown with grass. At a glance the engine is seen to be an old timer and probably will not stand a pressure of more than 30 to 40 pounds. It looks very like the first locomotive put into service on the old Northern Railway, and which I understand was built at Good's foundry on Queen street, Toronto. An old gentleman, grey haired and grey bearded, attired in a long black coat, white tie and high collar, and presenting the appearance of a superannuated Methodist preacher, occupies the dual position of conductor and brakeman. Notwithstanding his antiquated appearance, however, he seemed to be rather more than up-to-date in his movements, for on the whistle sounding 'down brakes,' he responded so quickly that the locomotive and car were brought to a stop some distance before the platform which does duty as a station, was reached, and the train had consequently to be started up again to reach its destination." In concluding his description, my friend remarked that the old conductor must have a great task on his hands in making up his daily returns for the railway company.

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THE electrical situation at Ottawa is at present an interesting one. Speculation is being indulged as to the outcome of the efforts which are being made to subject to competition the Ottawa Electric Company, which until now has furnished the entire supply of electricity for public and private purposes. The Deschene

Electric Co., which failed to secure a franchise, has gained an entrance to the city over government property alongside the canal, in return for lighting the canal. Thus far the company are lighting only one or two of the large buildings, and it seems doubtful whether they will become an important factor in the situation, as they are not allowed the use of the streets. The Metropolitan Electric Company has been organized and has obtained a franchise from the council, to utilize a water power seven miles distant to generate and transmit electricity for light and power to the city. This enterprise involves the construction of a canal at considerable cost. The company are doing some preliminary work in the neighborhood of the water power, but it is said are experiencing difficulty in getting the requisite capital subscribed. The opinion is expressed in Ottawa, that the company would prefer to sell out to the Ottawa Electric Co., if the way should open up for satisfactory negotiations. It is also reported that the Ottawa Electric Company have an option upon an equally good water power situated two or three miles nearer the city. Perhaps the best available water power is one situated on the Ottawa river, about 35 miles above Ottawa. Here a natural dam is formed by several islands with narrow spaces between. This power, which is the property of the Quebec government was recently offered for sale by auction. A condition was that the purchaser must expend the sum of \$300,000 upon development work, which had the effect of preventing offers. The fact that Nature has left so little to be done for the development of this power, should have prevented the insertion of such a condition. There are numerous water falls on the Gatineau, but the turbulency of that stream is such that the still water necessary to the avoidance of anchor ice, prevents their utilization for electrical purposes.

SPARKS.

The power house of the Canada Electric Light Co., at Amherst, N. S., was partially destroyed by fire on September 19th. The loss is believed to be covered by insurance. N. A. Rhodes and D. W. Robb are members of the company.

As a result of recent labor troubles in connection with the operation of the street railway at London, Ont., the council is said to be considering the purchase of the street railway property and its operation by the city as the best means of putting an end to the present unfortunate condition of affairs. In the event of being unable to buy out the existing company, a rival road is spoken of.

Application has been made to the Ontario government for the incorporation of the Port Stanley Electric Railway Company, to construct an electric railroad from Port Stanley to St. Thomas and London. The road, it is thought, could be constructed and equipped at an outlay of a quarter of a million dollars. The promoters of the scheme are the London and Port Stanley Gravel Road Company, who talk of having the road completed by May 24th next.

News has come to hand of the death, under distressing circumstances, of Mr. W. A. M. Pollock, electrician at the electric light station at Almonte, Ont. Deceased was engaged in rubbing powdered resin on a revolving pulley to keep the belt from slipping, and was standing in a narrow space at the end of shafting. By some means his right arm was caught in the belt, and he was thrown head foremost between the pulley and the bridge-tree. He was carried half way round the pulley and suspended head down, being wedged in the narrow five inches of space between the pulley and the bridge-tree. When extricated it was found that the arm of the deceased had been wrenched off at the elbow, and that he had received other serious injuries. Medical assistance was at once procured, but Mr. Pollock succumbed to his injuries in less than three hours. Deceased was a respected and well known resident of Almonte, and leaves three small children. He had been employed by the Almonte Electric Light Company for thirteen years.