

himself to be strongly in favor of uniform and public accounts, that the people may see exactly what the profits of the electric-lighting business are in the case of each company. If municipal ownership must come, he said, let the business of the central-station company be bought out by the city at a fair valuation, determined by an equitable system of accounting. A committee was appointed to determine the best method of analyzing fuel gas. A recommendation to Congress to pass the bill now before that body to establish a national standardization bureau was adopted. Pending the establishment of such a bureau, the association is arranging to have standard 16 c.p. lamps of 110 and 220 volts prepared at Columbia University for the use of members. A committee is also preparing for publication a specification and drawings for a standard photometer room and its equipment, and has under consideration a standard form of simple photometer. The committee appointed to consider the subject of grounded circuits gave it as their opinion that while the permanent "grounding" of one side of the secondary circuit is not an absolute preventative of accidents to person and property, yet it is a step in the right direction, and, if adopted, will add greatly to the safety of the public, and reduce the hazards attending the transmission of electrical energy by what is known as the alternating or transformer system. Mr. James B. Cahoon, of Syracuse, N. Y., was elected president for the ensuing year, and we are pleased to note the election of Mr. Charles B. Hunt, of London, Ont., as a member of the Executive Committee. It is rumored that the next convention may be held in Buffalo in connection with the Pan American Exposition.

Trade Opportunities in the Oriental Market.

UNTIL very recently the eyes of Canada were turned almost exclusively towards the east, and her thoughts occupied with commercial matters in Europe. During the last few years it has occurred to many that the Pacific ocean, instead of being the back road from the country, might become a highway fully as important as the Atlantic, and this idea is certain not to be disappointed by results. Trade with Australia, China, Japan, Malaya and Polynesia is no mean prize to strive for, and the splendid Pacific highway at our doors places us in a position to compete favorably with any country. The rapid advances made by the United States and Japan in their Oriental trade shows that business methods adjusted to the established ideas of the east will bring a quick return, and that the lack of flexibility inherent in British trade methods is resulting in the loss of the previous overwhelming commercial supremacy. If Canada is to take that part in the Oriental market which should be expected owing to her favorable geographical position, it will have to be brought about by a careful study of the existing and prospective conditions and demands and by enterprise in pushing sales. Many discussions have taken place regarding the trade possibilities of China, and as many diverse opinions have been expressed, varying from the optimistic idea that the millions of China represent a market for our exports equivalent to a similar population in Europe, to the pessimistic opinion that these Chinese millions will eventually swamp our markets by their cheap productions. Both of these extreme opinions are based on the supposition that the country has been opened up to trade and that foreign investments have been rendered

secure. The truth, as is generally the case, appears to lie between these extremes, for on the one hand no one who knows in any degree the conditions existing in the East will allow that its ability to absorb Western products is at all commensurate with its population, and that any deductions made from results in European countries are very misleading. On the other hand, Japan has progressed far enough to act as an object lesson in the increased cost of labor which results from an increase of production, and, speaking generally, it will be conceded that when a nation has arrived at some state of stability in her manufactures, the labor cost of the output will not be found to vary from the standard all over the world. For instance, labor in Europe is cheaper than in America when reckoned by the cost per hour, but it is found that in spite of this fact the labor cost of turning out manufactured articles is not very different owing to the greater rate of production per hour of the American artisan. This equalizing effect will be found to act as a corrective, and it does not appear at all probable that our western commerce is in danger of extinction at the hands of Oriental competition. The Oriental will be a keen competitor, but judging from his character he will not originate, but will be a very successful copyist. The initiative will be found without doubt in Europe and America.

Apart from China and the French colonies in the East, trade there is less restricted than in Europe. In China the unwillingness of the ruling classes to admit the foreigner, the insecurity of capital, the fluctuating currency, and greater than all, the poverty of the millions, are the great obstacles in the way of the western trader. These are obstacles that cannot be appreciated at their full value without a knowledge of the Chinese character, of its inertness, its placid content with things as they are, its sense of superiority over the Barbarian. Under these existing conditions no opening of the trade door will take place from within, but the country will have to be burglarized by the Occidental nations, and this will probably not be long deferred. What form the forcible entry will take is not apparent, but it appears that as it requires an Asiatic to deal with an Asiatic, Japan and Russia are best fitted to obtain the advantage, and to hold it when obtained. If the open door policy prevail there will be large openings for railway enterprise. Many lines are already projected, but the question as to whether they would pay in many cases is exceedingly problematical, as China has a tremendous canal system, with cheap native labor as the motive power. However, many will be built, and this will require the services of many engineers and great quantities of materials. In the mining field the prospects are exceedingly good, the country having coal in many provinces and minerals in abundance. This, with cheap labor, will stand in the way of great importations of raw materials, and whatever staples are required will be manufactured in the country, so that given the open door policy, the first effect would be the importation of engineering materials and machinery, but it seems improbable that any great increase in staple imports could take place. This lesson may be learned from the history of Japan, where imports are decreasing and exports increasing—although the process in China will be very much slower.

With the exception of the larger electrical machinery, Japan can and does manufacture for herself. China at