

THE YOUNG MAN'S CHANCES IN THE ELECTRICAL FIELD.

IN view of the opinion which seems largely to prevail that electricity is the thing to which young men should now turn their attention with the best hope of reaping satisfactory results from their labors, the editor of the *ELECTRICAL NEWS* deemed it advisable to solicit opinions on the subject. For this purpose the following letter was recently addressed to a few persons prominently identified with the electrical interests:

DEAR SIR, To assist me in answering frequent enquiries as to the possibilities for qualified young men in the various departments of electrical work, I have thought it advisable to endeavor to obtain an expression of opinion from a number of persons qualified to advise on the subject.

The enquiry may be briefly put thus:—"What are the chances of the young man who graduates as an Electrical Engineer in comparison with the young man who enters any of the other professions or commercial life?" I would esteem it a favor if you would kindly give me an expression of your views on this matter in time for publication in the *ELECTRICAL NEWS* for December.

C. H. MORTIMER.

We trust the appended replies will be of assistance to parents and young men who find themselves face to face with the problem of choosing in what direction life's efforts should be expended:

Mr. Granville C. Cunningham, manager and chief engineer of the Montreal Street Railway Company, writes: "At present there seems to be more opening in electrical engineering than in any other professions in this country. Of course the success of a man largely depends upon himself. There is little doubt, I think, but that electricity, during the coming years, will have large developments in this country."

The manager of another important electrical company, who requests that his name be omitted, writes:—"Replying to enquiry contained in yours of 28th inst., it is common knowledge that every profession, trade, and calling is overcrowded, but that there is room at the top for persons of exceptional ability, is well known, and any person of even more than average ability will succeed fairly well whether he be on a farm, in commerce, or in professional life. What then are the chances of a young man of more than average ability who graduates as an electrical engineer, in comparison with those of a young man of equal ability who enters one of the other professions, say law or medicine? Let us see how the matter stands in Toronto. There are in round figures 500 lawyers. We will not be far out in saying that the number who possess more than average ability and who have established a practice is about 150, and these have incomes of \$1,000 a year and upwards. Are there ten electrical engineers in Toronto earning this amount?"

"There are lawyers in Canada making eight and ten thousand dollars per year and some as high as fifteen and twenty thousand. How many electrical engineers in the country are making half of the lowest figure?"

"What is true in law holds equally so in medicine. There are about 400 doctors in Toronto, and judging by the houses they inhabit and the style of their living, the average income of an established doctor of more than average ability must at least be as great as that of his legal brother.

"The man of less than average ability has neither room nor place in any profession. He may graduate as an electrical engineer, but will end up in attending a dynamo or stringing wire at forty or fifty dollars a month. The time spent at college would have been better employed in getting a practical mechanical education or a sound business training.

"I have no desire to discourage persons from going into a business employing electricity. The prospects of a bright intelligent young man would be at least as good as they would be in any non-electric business, but I feel that our schools and colleges are turning out a hundred electrical engineers for every vacant position in the country. What is to become of them? Electricity does not spell any royal road to fortune."

Mr. Wm. H. Browne, general manager of the Royal Electric Co., Montreal, writes: "In reply to your enquiry as to what are the chances as an electrical engineer, compared with other professions or commercial life, I presume the answer would be that on the average the electrical engineer would be likely to do as well as the average man in other professions or commercial life.

"In electrical work, as in all other work, the most room is at the top, but it is quite likely that for some time to come the electrical engineer who can be at the top may not be as financially successful as his corresponding member of the legal or medical profession or the commercial man.

"The field for opportunity for clients is necessarily, at present, much more restricted in the electrical line than in the other professions or commercial life, because the industry is new, but there is no doubt that the growth of the electrical industry, by reason of the increase of the application of electric power, will very largely increase, and within a few years will require the talents of the best members of the profession, and those who may be capable of meeting these requirements will, no doubt, do as well as the best members of other professions.

"In my judgment, one of the greatest needs of the electrical business of this country to-day is the employment in all operating electrical plants, of thoroughly well qualified young men, graduated as electrical engineers.

"I have frequent applications in our business here, from parents of young boys, sixteen to eighteen years of age, to take them into our shops and teach them the electrical business.

"The impression appears to prevail, that this is all that is necessary to make competent electrical engineers.

"I am obliged to refuse all such applications and advise such parents that if their sons have special aptitude and inclination for mechanics, that they be sent to some good college to receive a thorough complete course in electrical and mechanical engineering, for the two are almost necessarily bound together, and after graduation, to seek occupation practically, either in the operation of an electrical plant or in a manufacturing establishment.

"The electrical engineer requires special qualifications to fit him for his profession and there have been many who have graduated as such who have probably made a grave mistake, by reason of not possessing the special aptitude and talents."

Prof. Galbraith, Principal of the School of Practical Science, Toronto, writes: "Your question is not an easy one to answer. It seems to me that it is well to assume that all money-making occupations, businesses and professions are full. This being the case, success will depend largely on the special fitness of the candidate for his chosen vocation. Natural capacity for one's work, supplemented by education and training ought, other things being equal, to ensure a reasonable amount