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BLUNDERS IN ELECTRIC LIGHTING.

We have long been of opinion that electric light Corporations do not exercise sufficient care and caution in the locating and erecting of stations where the conversion of steam power into electric energy is intended to take place.

It is pretty generally admitted that the great drawback to the more general use of electric light in preference to gas for illumination is its cost; hence the importance and absolute necessity of studying the greatest possible economy in the production of this popular and beautiful light.

When we see in the principal cities of Canada, stations erected at great cost and elaborately furnished with steam boilers and numerous engines running at from 6 to 8 lbs. of fuel per horse-power per hour, we cannot be blamed for criticising a state of affairs which is highly damaging to the best interests of electric lighting and ruinous to the stockholders.

Apart from the serious loss attending the application of so many small high speed running engines, we would refer to the greater violation of the first principles of steam engineering, economy.

The present age has demonstrated beyond a doubt that, if economy is wanted, circumstances and conditions must be obtained to admit of the application and use of compound condensing engines, so as to get the maximum of power at the least possible cost. Now there is no reason why in the majority of our cities these conditions should not be fulfilled, and we think it is high time to at once shape for such a course.

It is all very well to say that, in the States, this and the other thing exists; but that is no excuse. We have in Canada engineers who have had fully as good an education and experience as our cousins—indeed, the most of our engineers are gentlemen of high standing, who have had experience both in Europe and the

States, and their opinions are entitled to the highest respect.

Take, for example, the electric lighting stations in the two first cities of Canada, viz., Montreal and Toronto. We find to our astonishment that electric light stations are located in some very undesirable and inconvenient nook, and, notwithstanding the fact that an inexhaustible source of water lies near them, also numerous locations suitable for electric light stations, where steam appliances could be arranged to run easily at one-third the present cost, old-fashioned and very expensive courses are adopted.

The reason, perhaps, for all this is the fact, consulting engineers are rarely, if ever called in to assist those less able to decide on such important matters.

It is high time that such false pride and reserve were abolished, and the services of our consulting engineers valued.

Parties should recognize that the obtaining of special advice and assistance from consulting engineers is attended with very satisfactory results, and, without it, blundering and loss will, more or less, take place.

Another evil has crept into electric light stations, that of having reserve engines to take the place of those liable to break down. The same might be said with more force of the dynamos.

It is also urged that a number of small, high speed engines is better far than one really good engine. Now, we believe this to be a fallacy, ruinous in the extreme, and it cannot stand analyzing.

The same ideas were for many years persisted in other departments of mechanical application; but they had to be given up on the ground of folly and expense.

It is an old story, this double reserve application, and we hope and believe, in the interests of electric lighting, that it will be abandoned.

Our readers will, perhaps, think we are taking radical ground, but we are willing to stand by it all and defend our position against the assaults of criticism and discussion: so for the present we will close and keep our reserve powder dry.

THE signal officer on the summit of Pike's Peak says the highest velocity of the wind ever recorded there was 110 miles per hour, when the instruments broke and cord wood began flying down the mountain. The guide adds that seventy-five miles per hour would lift a mule out of the trail.