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EDITOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Correspondence is invited upon all topics coming legitimately within the scope of this journal.

THE result of the Engineers' Competition instituted by the *ELECTRICAL NEWS* for the benefit of its subscribers, is given in the present number. Answers to the questions propounded were received from only *four* engineers. The lack of interest thus indicated is at once surprising and disappointing. It was the intention that this competition should be followed by others, but under the circumstances it would seem advisable to postpone further efforts in this direction until Canadian engineers feel the need of and manifest some desire for self improvement.

THERE is much disappointment expressed by representatives of the electrical industries of the United States as the result of the recent discovery that the dimensions of the proposed electrical exhibition buildings in connection with the Worlds' Fair are inadequate for their purpose. Unless the chief architect can be prevailed upon to change the plans which have been prepared, the electrical exhibits, instead of being centered in one building, must be distributed amongst several. Such a distribution would be most unsatisfactory both to exhibitors and visitors. It is, to say the least, peculiar that Prof. Barrett, Chief of the Department of Electricity in connection with the World's Fair, seems not to have been consulted in a matter of such importance.

AT the request of a number of our subscribers, we have opened in the present number of the *ELECTRICAL NEWS* a question and answer department, which it is hoped will become one of the most valuable features of this journal. Every man who finds himself called upon to operate electric or steam plant, is confronted occasionally with puzzling problems, the solution of which he would thankfully be made acquainted with. When the reader comes across a knotty problem of this nature, let him bethink him of the question and answer department of this journal. Write down as concisely and clearly as possible what you want to know, and every effort will be made to supply you with the information. It is not expected, however, that you will be like a sponge, absorbent only, we want your assistance in answering questions whenever you may be in a position to give it.

APPLICATION has been made to the Council of the city of Toronto on behalf of the Toronto Telephone Company, a new organization, for permission to string wires and exercise privileges similar to those enjoyed by the Bell Company. That the application is supported by the signatures of 2,000 ratepayers, is sufficient proof that the telephone users of the city are not

satisfied with the present condition of affairs, under which they undoubtedly are compelled to pay too high a price. If two telephone companies were in operation, however, a telephone of each system would become a necessity, precluding the possibility of lessening the cost and complicating matters in such a way as to add to the annoyance which not unfrequently is experienced where only one system is in use. A plan preferable to that of bringing into operation a second company, would be to place such restrictions upon the existing company as would insure to the citizens a cheap and effective service.

THE season is now rapidly approaching when it behooves the careful manager of a central electric plant to look well to his lightning arrester, or if he has not such a useful little contrivance on his lines, to see that a sufficient number are placed there without delay. In the early days of electric lighting, numerous casualties happened to dynamos without any apparent cause. Some of these were no doubt due to defective insulation, but the majority of cases owed their origin to the insidious but lively spark of static electricity. It was not at all necessary for the trouble to happen in the midst of a howling thunder storm where there could be no mistake at all about the wires being "struck by lightning" as a self-evident fact. A very slight atmospheric disturbance, in an electrical sense, perhaps even on a clear night, might be abundantly sufficient to produce a tiny spark which, jumping from the wire of a dynamo to the iron core, carried with it the current of the machine. In fact, instances have been frequent where the static electricity generated from the driving belt has grounded the dynamo current and burnt out the machine. At all events, all wires running on poles should have efficient lightning arresters where they enter the building of the central station. This is especially necessary now where circuits of from ten to twenty miles are of common occurrence. The loss of time and expense caused by the grounding of the current on the core of a single dynamo would more than pay for a complete outfit of arresters for a whole station, and it is an occurrence likely to happen a number of times in a single season in an unprotected establishment.

THE town fathers of West Toronto Junction are making such an exhibition of the results of municipal handling of an electric light business as to afford a pointed illustration of our oft repeated opinion that the exploiting of such things should be left to private enterprise. They have been at it nearly a year now. Some months ago a by-law was passed appropriating fifteen thousand dollars to be expended in purchasing electric light plant, but so far nothing has been done except to squander the town's good money in a councilmanic jaunt to various cities to see electric light. This would not be so bad, or so much worse than is usually the case if they had stopped the excursion when the municipal grant was all expended, but to continue the trip to various cities at the expense of a would-be contractor was a glaring breach of the unwritten law of good taste, as well as a direct violation of the statutes in that case made and provided. It requires no great strain on the English language to designate a free excursion at the expense of a tenderer on a corporation contract as a method to produce an undue influence, or in other words, to act as a bribe in their favor when the award is considered. It now appears that while the committees have been wrangling over the merits of their various favorites they have allowed the time to expire during which they should have given notice to annul the gas contract. The constituents of these civic solons will therefore have the privilege of revelling in the semi-darkness of the gas lamps for another year at least. When the immortal Winkle was out shooting, Sam Weller suggested that as they would likely come up with a covey of partridges in the next field, he had better begin to fire at once and he would perhaps get the shot out of the barrel by the time the birds would rise. Perhaps if the West Torontonians begin in earnest to get their electric light system, it might possibly be in operation before the expiration of the extra year that fate has so kindly vouchsafed to them.

THE suggestion made by Mr. Gibson in his capacity of Chairman of the Legislative Committee to the delegation of stationary engineers who recently waited upon that Committee, was an exceedingly good one and one that the engineers would