

users and the greatest possible share of the profits be divided among the people of Ontario—not among the members of the Government.

The policy of the new Ontario Ministry on the nickel question is in fine contrast to that of the Dominion Government which—in spite of the protests of individuals of its own party—has played into the hands of the foreign corporation which has held a monopoly of our nickel industry in a most questionable manner.

PROGRESS OF ACETYLENE LIGHTING.

A recent number of the Canadian Electrical News contained a table, attributed to a committee of the Canadian Electrical Association, purporting to show the position of acetylene lighting in Canada. This table was compiled from replies received in response to circulars in which a series of questions was asked as to the number of generators installed, the number discontinued, the cause of accidents, etc. These circulars could only be sent to those who were known to have installed acetylene lighting plants. Unfortunately for statisticians a large number of people who receive such circulars never take the trouble to reply, and when this fact is taken into account, and the further fact that large numbers of business firms and private citizens have installed acetylene plants of which the compiler, could have known nothing, it will be evident that the table could be of very little value for statistical purposes. Indeed a footnote to this table states that it is "probably inaccurate as to the number of generators installed, the number in use, the capacity of light, the period of use etc." In other words, the compilers make the Canadian Electrical Association responsible for putting forward a table of figures which they admit to be inaccurate in every detail, including the "etceteras," which are supposed to comprehend the comments of those correspondents who reported. According to these tables there were installed in Canada last year 217 acetylene lighting plants, of which 62 had been thrown out, leaving 155 in use, and in 30 of these installations accidents were reported. Even if these returns were complete, a moment's reflection would show the inadequacy of the record. Every gas company and electric light company knows that a certain proportion of customers change their house and store lighting, throwing out one system and putting in another, or they discontinue their light by reason of removal to another place, but these changes, which are constantly going on, are no argument against either gas or electricity as an illuminant. Then as to accidents, the wonder is not that there were thirty accidents (the period of time in which these occurred is not stated), but that there were not three times that number. We must reflect that practically all these acetylene lighting plants were isolated ones; so that to make the comparison fair we have only to imagine that gas lighting had just been introduced when acetylene lighting was tried, and that each house was lighted by a separate generator as in the case of acetylene. Assuming that as little was known of the nature of gas as acetylene, we could then imagine how the record of accidents would compare.

The apparent purpose of these statistics was to show that acetylene was making no headway as an illuminant. That this conclusion is hardly justified may be deduced from the fact that the world's output of calcium carbide (the source of acetylene gas) has grown from a few thousand dollars annual value in 1895-6 to the value of \$19,228,300 in 1898, the quantity of carbide being 282,380 tons. The countries principally producing this are the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Italy and England. As far as most countries are concerned, including Canada.

the difficulty with the users of acetylene is that the supply of carbide has not kept up with the demand, and many people have had to give up acetylene lighting simply because they cannot depend on getting the carbide. This deficiency may soon be remedied in Canada by the establishment of such works as those now being established by the Bronsons at Ottawa, which will be prepared to turn out 15 tons a day in the spring and will later on produce about 30 tons a day. The firm of A. Holland & Son, of Ottawa, who deal in calcium carbide, showed a representative of this journal orders from many foreign countries, some of them requiring a supply of several tons per month. These orders Mr. Holland has had to turn away because he could not guarantee the supply of carbide. The same difficulty is experienced at the Willson Carbide Works at Merritton. There is plenty of room in the industrial world for all three illuminants, and certainly the demand for calcium carbide for the production of acetylene gas is quite remarkable.

—F. G. Moon, Ottawa, an employee of the Post-Office Department, has invented another roller boat. A large working model has been built and a futile attempt was made a short time ago to make it roll. Like other roller boats, however, the trial of the model reveals a number of problems which the inventor had not taken into account. The roller principle of navigation has been tried in many places in Great Britain, Europe and the United States, but judging by its past records it is not likely to prove a success, except possibly for the navigation of sheltered rivers having a quiet current.

—The Bricklayers' and Masons' Union in Ottawa has passed a resolution condemning the proposed introduction of technical instruction into the public schools of Ontario. That such an act of folly should be succeeded the next week by a resolution of the executive committee of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association opposing the introduction into Canada of the metric system is almost enough to justify those amongst us whose croakings about the smallness of our industries and the hopelessness of their competition in the world's markets, at last have nearly been put to silence by the rattle of machinery in our overworked factories. The Manufacturers' Association has estimated that the introduction of the metric system would cost \$2,000,000. With their all-sufficient wisdom these good people fail to offset this sum by the foreign trade of Canada, of which we stand in danger of losing a large part if we adhere to our present clumsy system. The metric system is simply applying to weights and measures the advantages we have in our monetary system. Would any Canadian discard our decimal system of money and go back to the "old Canadian currency," or the sterling system of coinage? As we realize the simplicity of the decimal system of money so we would see the immense gain in time and convenience in the adoption of the decimal or metric system of weights and measures. When even in conservative England a body like the Associated Chamber of Commerce, representing the crystallized opinion of the great commercial associations of the Kingdom, pronounces so emphatically on the necessity of this reform in order to save British foreign trade, we may realize that it is a change which must come. With ourselves it is only a question whether we or the United States shall be first in the field, for the latter country is now agitating for the change and has commenced an educational propaganda with that object. As to the Ottawa labor unions who wish their children to grow up without technical education in the schools, they should remember that when the steam