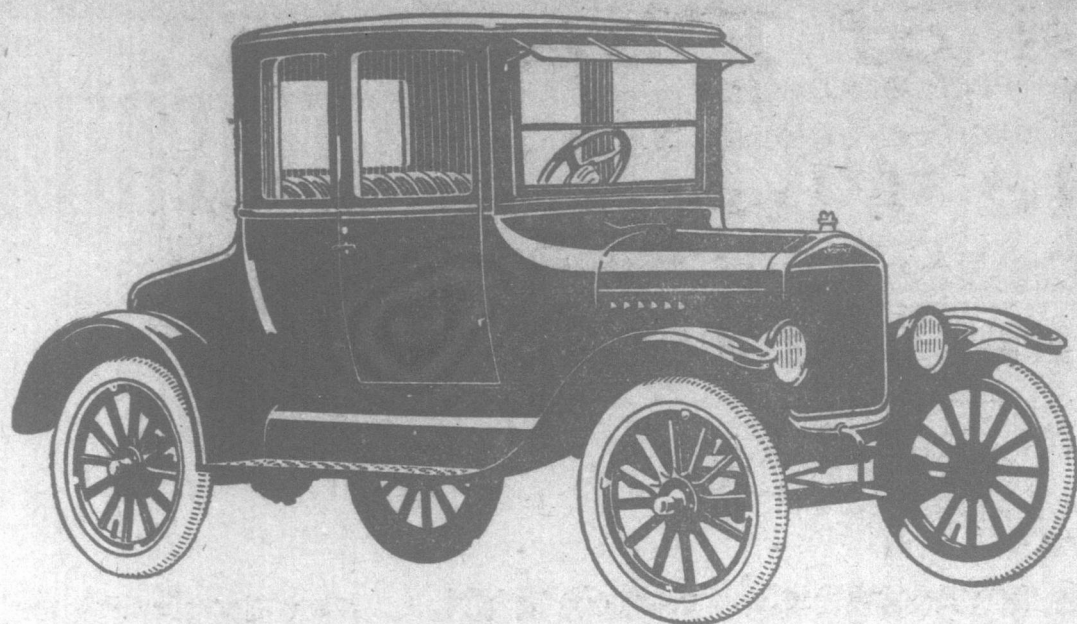




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Niagara's Power From the Tides

By RENE BACHE.

The Federal Power Commission at Washington, D.C., now has under consideration a new project for harnessing the tides of the Bay of Fundy, at the northeast corner of the United States. It is said to be the first really practical plan for a large-scale tide-power development in this country.

We are harnessing our rivers, and with the help of wonderful new machinery, are converting the energy of their flow into electricity for industrial uses, for illumination, and even for operating railroads. The eventual possibilities of such hydro-electric developments are gigantic. Nevertheless, they have an ultimate limit, which engineers already are able to estimate with a fair share of definiteness. The power the tides could furnish, on the other hand, is limited only by the vastness of the seven seas and by the eternal journey of the moon around the earth.

Control and use of that power is the next great epoch-making achievement that mankind may expect. Discovery of a means whereby this can be accomplished will elevate civilization to a new plane. It will mean that all of our factories can be run by the tides; that our cities can be lighted and our houses heated by the unfailing moon!

The moon? Exactly so. For it is the moon's attraction that makes the tides. If we can make the tides work for us, we shall in effect be harnessing the lunar orb to supply the demand for power that now is draining the world's limited fuel resources.

As a matter of fact, the thing was accomplished successfully long ago. Formerly along the New England coast there were tide mills operated in places wherever an inlet could be dammed conveniently, with a pond to hold the water that flowed in on the side of the tide. Power was derived from the flow of the water into the pond and out again, driving a large paddle-wheel. It was a continuous power (used for small sawmills and flour mills), thanks to a most ingenious arrangement by which the current that drove the wheel was made to run in the same direction all the time, whether the tide was coming in or going out.

Upon a principle similar in effect, is based the new project for putting the tides of the Bay of Fundy to work. The plans include the building of four dams, with a total length of five miles, across the outlet of Passamaquoddy Bay and Head Harbor, thereby creating two pools, upper and lower, with a power house between.

It is proposed to install a system of gates that will permit the floodtide to pour into the upper pool, and allow the lower pool to empty itself at ebb-tide. By this arrangement a stream equal in volume to the Niagara River will be poured continuously through the power house, driving turbines that are expected to generate enough electricity to supply a large part of Maine and eastern Canada.

The tides in the Bay of Fundy rise and fall through a range of from 35 to 45 feet—one of the greatest tidal ranges in the world. At the power house an "operating head"—never less than 16 feet and running as high as 27 feet—will be maintained. From 400,000 to 500,000 continuous electrical horsepower will be developed.

The upper pool, about 16 miles long by 10 miles wide, will be separated from the lower by a dam between the Maine shore and Deer Island—the power house to be close by this dam—and by two dams connecting Deer Island with the New Brunswick mainland and Campobello Island, respectively. A fourth dam, to impound the lower pool, will bridge the gap between Campobello Island and West Quoddy Head.

The lower pool will be somewhat less in area than the upper one. Locks are to be provided at the dams connecting Deer Island with Campobello Island and the mainland of New Brunswick, permitting ships to pass from one pool to the other.

Tides in the open ocean rise and fall with a maximum range of three feet; but the waters of the sea, rushing at flood with an estuary such as the Bay of Fundy, are literally piled up, so that in that great bay the difference in level between the high and the low tide sometimes is as much as 45 feet.

The idea back of the tremendous super-power is that the flood at each rising tide shall be allowed to pour through opened gates, filling the upper pool. During the rise it will drive the turbines at the power dam. During the ebb the lower pool will be permitted to empty itself into the ocean, while a stream equal in volume to a large river pours out of the upper pool through the power house, driving the turbines.

The turbines will operate huge dynamos. And, since the supply of power will be continuous, there will be no pause by day or night in the production of electricity, which will be distributed by wires over a vast area for industrial and domestic uses.

All this useful energy will be captured indirectly from the moon. Oddly enough, few people realize how big the moon is. Its diameter is a little more than one fourth that of the earth—2163 miles, to be exact—and

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Notice is hereby given that Frederick Augustus Eustis of 131 State Street, Boston, in the State of Massachusetts in the United States of America, Metallurgical Engineer, Proprietor of the Newfoundland Patent No. 492, dated May 11th, A.D. 1922, for new and useful improvements in the art of making Electrolytic Iron is prepared to bring the said invention into operation in this Colony and to license the right to use the same on reasonable terms or to sell the same.

Dated at St. John's, this 8th day of April, A.D. 1924.

JOHN FENELON,
Solicitor for Patentee.

PATENT NOTICE.

Four weeks after the date hereof application will be made to His Excellency the Governor in Council for a grant of Letters Patent for "Improvements relating to the treatment of fibrous materials," to be made to James Rankin Garrow of 7-8 Idol Lane, Great Tower Street, London, E.C.3, England, Technical Chemist.

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MINARD'S LINIMENT RELIEVES RHEUMATISM.

its attraction is so great that it causes two great waves in the ocean, on opposite sides of the earth, to travel around the globe once in 24 hours. These waves make the tides. The sun's attraction is concerned incidentally, for it causes extra high tides when in a position to help the pull of the moon.

The tides represent unlimited power going to waste. But tide-power developments are practicable only where the tide enters an estuary and, with a piling up of the water, rushes up a channel. This phenomenon, consistently illustrated in the Bay of Fundy, is called a "tidal bore."

Developments for the utilization of tidal power are in practice limited to localities where natural facilities are favorable for creating tidal basins, where portions of the flow can be impounded and controlled, and where conditions are suitable for the erection of power plants similar in character to hydroelectric stations.

All this, of course, applies to large-scale developments. Small tide mills were in use in England as early as the eleventh century, and also in Brittany. In a simple form, such as installation can be made by placing the power plant between two channels connecting the sea with a reservoir basin, as in the New England power mill. One channel is closed while the basin is filling; the other while the basin is emptying. The flow can be utilized coming and going.

The water-wheel, which dates far back in history, almost undoubtedly was a Chinese invention. Probably the same is true of the tide mill. At present there are many such mills in China, located on small tidal creeks, and used for cleaning and "polishing" rice.

In most instances employment is made of "stop-logs" to form a removable dam between two stone piers. When the creek has filled up to the level of high tide, the logs, inserted in grooves cut in the piers, make a fairly serviceable dam, retaining the water as the tide falls. When the tide has ebbed, an outlet gate is opened, and the impounded water is discharged through a wooden flume upon a wooden wheel 18 or 20 feet in diameter.

What has been accomplished for so many years by primitive methods and with the help of equally primitive apparatus, certainly can be achieved, in the light of modern scientific knowledge, with the wonderful hydroelectric machinery already in use.

The moon is a lazy orb, serving little useful purpose except to give us a certain amount of nocturnal illumination. We have persuaded it to grind grain and saw planks, but it can be compelled to operate mechanical plants on a large scale. It can be made to run the machinery of our factories, illuminate our cities, heat our houses, drive our railway trains, and lift the elevators in our skyscraper buildings and apartment hotels.

There will be no lack of locations, in estuaries and straits, where tidal developments on a large scale can be established. Why, for example, should not the tides of Delaware Bay and of the Chesapeake be harnessed? Experts say there is no reason why they cannot be.

In the meantime, the attention of hydraulic engineers naturally is attracted to places where the tidal rise and fall is extraordinary great. The Bay of Fundy is one of them. Another is at St. Malo, on the Rance River, in France, where the sea, running up a big estuary, gives the waters a 40-foot fall. Another is in England, where the damming of the Severn is expected to yield continuously a power greater than is derived from all the hydroelectric developments of Niagara. In Cook's Inlet, southern Alaska, the tidal range is the greatest known anywhere, attaining a maximum of 50 feet when moon and sun pull together.

Many years ago, an American warship was anchored in a Chinese river, and a cannon, which was being hoisted on deck, fell overboard. The American officers, after trying many expedients to recover the weapon, gave it up. Presently, however, half-a-dozen Chinamen offered to undertake the job.

They fetched a float and tall sheers, stuck the latter deep into the mud of the river bottom, and, at low tide, attached the gun to the float with ropes. The next high tide raised the float, and the gun with it, six feet. The gun was fastened at that height, and, by repeating the operations again and again, it was soon brought to the surface. Then timbers and more timbers were shoved under the float, until, with more of the same business, the gun was lifted to the level of the ship's deck and shoved aboard.

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