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ELECTRICITY ON HIGHWAYS.

The law of electric wires in connection with streets and highways is becoming of very great importance, and opens up what is practically a new field of law. We are glad, therefore, to see that this subject has been dealt with by a member of the New Jersey Bar in a book recently published.

In this, as well as in other countries, the subject is a growing one, the uses of electricity during the past few years having greatly multiplied, and this wonderful force applied to attain ends in a manner formerly unknown. The application of this new motive power and medium of communication is, from its nature, fruitful of many changes in the existing order of things, and produces curious, and often dangerous complications, thereby raising numerous questions difficult of settlement. The result has been much litigation, especially in the United States. A large crop of the same may also be expected here.

The author of the book referred to opens up the subject by speaking of the legal relation of lines of electric wires to the streets and highways, where they have been placed, by saying that this relation depends to a great extent upon the question whether the use of the streets and highways serves the purposes for which they were opened, and also the question of whether they interfere with the uses to which these roads have commonly been put, the discussion necessarily involving the consideration of what are the proper uses of streets, and how far these uses are subservient to the various uses of electric wires, and also what are the public or private rights in respect to the streets, and the use of them for the above purpose. In considering the questions which naturally arise in view of these relations, it is of course necessary, in the first place, to ascertain by what authority streets may be used for electric wires, thus bringing up the questions of municipal control, consent of local authorities, police regulations, and special legislation. These are necessarily different in different countries, and some of the author's observations do not apply here; but there is much useful information given of a general character, and the work is a very intelligent consideration of the subject in reference to the points which have arisen, and of many that are likely to arise from time to time.

The questions of most interest to the public are the rights of the owners of abutting lands in respect to the use of the streets for electric wires. These questions first came up in reference to telegraph wires and their attendant poles; then telephone wires and more poles began to invade the streets of our cities; these were followed by the heavier wires of the electric light companies, and now we are confronted with the more deadly and unsightly wires and paraphernalia