

DANGERS OF OVERHEAD WIRES.

The report recently made by the Canadian Fire Underwriters' Association on overhead electrical wiring in Montreal, and submitted to the city council on June 10th last, was forwarded to Mr. Wm. S. Boyd, electrical inspector of the National Board of Fire Underwriters of New York and Chicago, for criticism. Mr. Boyd's report hereon is a grave indictment of the companies owning the wires, and of the civic authorities for neglecting to tackle the problem. It asserts that an underground conduit system will be the soundest investment for these corporations, and suggests that the underwriters would be more successful if they took the matter up with the service corporations than with the civic council. Mr. Boyd claims that the conditions are more serious than those which prevailed in Baltimore just previous to the great fire, and which greatly impeded the work of the fire department during that great disaster.

With the present wiring system, it could be arranged to reduce wiring in the congested districts to a minimum. He says: "No engineer of repute will contend that there is any form of aerial construction work known to the profession which can be employed by an electrical service company, and enable it to guarantee approximate continuous service.

These experiments have been tried too many times to admit of any argument, and in the large cities, where a large number of customers are supplied within a comparatively small area, it is practically absolutely necessary for the service company to install an underground wiring system.

Bad Engineering Practice.

Frequently the congested condition of over-head wiring in the business district is due to bad engineering practice at the time the plant was originally laid out. Instead of carrying current for the outskirts by a route which does not traverse the business district, the main pole line supplying not only the business district, but also the balance of the city, is very frequently brought through the very heart of the municipality, thereby greatly multiplying the number of conductors actually necessary for the needs of the congested area, whereas, by the use of a little foresight, overhead wires in this part of the city could be reduced to a minimum and greatly improve the appearance and safety of the streets by carrying conductors feeding other parts of the city along less frequented streets and those which do not contain a large number of tall buildings."

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