

MERITS OF THE STORAGE BATTERY.

TORONTO, Jan. 23, 1891.

Editor ELECTRICAL NEWS.

My attention having been called to an article in your January number, and believing that the writer would readily avail himself of the opportunity of being set right in reference to the all important and interesting question of the possible use of the storage battery system, for solving the question of rapid and comfortable transit, and eliminating all ideas of intentional misconception and allowing the error of judgment manifested in the article to be excusable, I nevertheless desire to set the matter before your already numerous readers in its proper aspect.

I notice the article in question refers to the storage battery as "a forlorn hope," and yet hopes against hope that the problem will be solved by an economically successful storage battery. Why, only on Thursday last in the Toronto Courts of Arbitration, Mr. Rice, the eminent City Engineer of Cleveland, on the witness stand said, in answer to counsel, that the storage battery question had been solved for street car work, and further answered in reply to questions put to him as to where the question of the commercial value of the accumulator had been solved: "Right here in your own city you have the best storage battery system on this continent, and the best for street cars or any other work I have ever seen." In reply to further questions, he said he referred to the Roberts storage battery system, of Toronto. Truly a prophet is never without honor save in his own country.

I have four distinct engagements in four different cities of the States to put my system in operation. With scarcely any effort, but simply on representations of experts, a company was formed in the States a few days ago, with a capital of \$1,500,000.

Prof. Pike, a name known and relied upon all over the Dominion, after examining every known system on the continent, returned and gave an order for the School of Practical Science.

Statements regarding new storage batteries are practically worthless. In a masterly article in the *Electrical World*, the statement was made that the man who could point to a positive plate that had stood six months rough and careless work had solved the problem. Last week we forwarded to C. O. Mailloux, of New York, a positive plate that had been in constant service and subjected to continual travel for very nearly two years. Mr. Mailloux in reply expressed an opinion that established a record, and one we had need to be proud of. We are now engaged upon a plant for car work and forming a company for that distinct purpose; that is, of utilizing the battery for car purposes.

Now, in what are the distinctive features necessary to insure a perfect battery for car work? Why exactly the features

required in every purpose to which a storage battery is applied: 1st, Freedom from buckling; 2nd, Disintegration of the paste; 3rd, Capability of standing heavy charging and discharging. These are or have been the common difficulties to be met with in the solution of this problem. We have overcome every one of them. We have not been deterred by the "forlorn hope" ideas of anybody—no true plodder in the pathway of scientific research was ever deterred by that idea. In proof of that we give a three years guarantee.

What we have done can or may be improved upon by others, but this much is certain, that before many weeks pass a storage battery system will be in operation in or near enough to this city that will for ever settle the problem. We have quietly replaced and are replacing all the leading makes, and such is our confidence in our system that we have applied for patents in every country in the world where it is possible to obtain them.

The question has been solved in England. The Central Tramway Company, of Birmingham, are putting an extensive system into operation there; the North Metropolitan Company are also using storage batteries. They will have to be used in all crowded cities, and certainly no where, in my opinion, would the practical solution of the question be hailed more gladly than in Toronto and Montreal. Hamilton made an offer of track, car and motor for a test on their line, which offer we respectfully refused, as we did not care to be trammelled by an agreement that rendered necessary the possible subversion of our ideas.

We have the battery, experienced engineers, and the advent of our company will at once dispel "forlorn hopes," by the recognition of the end, and object of the work of years.

A few days ago, at the invitation of the T. H. overhead system, Ald. Saunders, the mayor and a number of city gentlemen enjoyed the hospitality of the President, and after expressing their approval of everything, yet said that the storage battery would be the only permissible electric system allowed in the city.

Yours truly,

WM. ROBERTS.

THE ELECTRICAL NEWS is in receipt of an invitation to be present at the first annual dinner of the Montreal Branch, Canadian Association of Stationary Engineers. The event will be celebrated at the Richieu Hotel, Montreal, on the evening of Feb. 14th. The NEWS hopes to be represented, and to be able to present in its next issue a picture of the good time enjoyed.

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