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NOTE.

It may fairly be said that no complete and up-to-date treatise on electric motive power applied to railways and tramways exists at the present time; and it is believed that such a publication will fill a want which is felt not only by the engineering profession and by tramway managers, but also by many shareholders, landowners, and others, who are directly affected by the questions involved in increased and improved rapid transit facilities.

This belief is greatly strengthened by the general interest shown in the series of articles on "Electric Traction" which have appeared in the columns of Engineering since January, 1895. These articles form the basis of the present book, but the descriptive and statistical matter has been most thoroughly revised and brought up to date, and recent developments have been carefully noted.

Of the importance of the subject there can be no doubt. Electrical motive power has during the past few years made most astonishing progress. In the United States and Canada it has already practically superseded every other means of tramway and light railway traction. Upon the Continent of Europe a similar movement has now assumed substantial proportions. In many of the Colonies electric lines are in operation or under construction. In Great Britain a number of electric railways and tramways are running with most satisfactory results, and a widespread interest is taken in the extension of tramway and light railway services.

Such being the present state of affairs, it has been the wish of the author to lay before his readers a complete statement of electric traction as it now exists: the conditions under which its use is permissible and advisable; the machinery, plant, and apparatus now obtainable; the
Note.

design of stations, and the method of installing a line to the best advantage; the rules, regulations, forms, methods of accounts, etc., which have been evolved from the actual practice of important lines.

The data given have been personally collected by the author, who, with this end in view, has visited almost every great city and representative plant of the United States and Europe.

With much pleasure the author acknowledges the assistance rendered him by Mr. James Dredge, of Engineering. To him, as friend, editor, and publisher, the author is greatly indebted for his constant and kindly interest, and for the valuable advice which his wide experience in scientific and engineering publications so well qualifies him to give.

In the preparation of this book the author has been greatly aided by the courtesy extended to him by the owners, engineers, and managers of electric traction plants, as well as by the manufacturers of the machinery and material used in their construction, and by the technical press.

His obligation to these gentlemen is too great to be set forth in detail in a prefatory note, but to them as a body he desires to express his most grateful acknowledgement.

The author’s thanks must, however, be especially offered for the willing and ready aid which he has constantly received from Mr. Robert W. Blackwell, a pioneer of electric traction progress on both sides of the Atlantic, to whose wide experience and great practical knowledge of electric railway construction and working he owes much which may be found to be of value in this volume.

PHILIP DAWSON.