Research Notes: Nationalizing of Business.
Electric Current

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Electric Current:

The struggle over the value of the electric current, when the alternating current had proved its usefulness, still went on. The opposition now objecting to putting them underground, as was being planned at various points. The over-head trolley had still, particularly in New York, a crazy net-work of wire - dangerous, too.

Already telephone wires were underground, but when an attempt was made to put the a.c. wires under there began a struggles which lasted some two years. A series of injunctions and counter-injunctions - the most spectacular where exhibit was in New York, popular excitement disturbed the Mayor - the City Government - in an attack on the over-head wires.

"Raid made upon the overhead wires by gangs of municipal employees under orders to cut away all that were improperly insulated, obstructively hung, or otherwise liable to be dangerous.

"Many of the laborers employed in these forays, not being trained for their task, made costly mistakes of indiscrimination, cutting inoffensive wires and severing important connections. As a result, the great city was left almost in darkness at times, as arrangements for going back to lighting
the streets with gas were not easily perfected. But finally
peace was restored on a basis which, if not to the entire
satisfaction of all parties, at least permitted the subway
system to be finished and the overhead wires transferred to
it; and, but for an occasional quarrel over rental privileges
or the like, New York resumed its normal night illumination,
and something like order settled down where chaos had reigned
before." *

This battle over the current and later over
the conduit
laying ½ in the subways for all electric wires went on in the
newspapers, in legislatures, and towns of
ignorance horrible cruelty from public experiments
on living dogs. (Page 145. Leupp.)

All kept the public, particularly in New York
City, in fever heat for some two years. Both the a.c. and
the underground wires and the underground placement, along
with other electric current wires won out.

* George Westinghouse. His Life and Achievements. By Francis E.