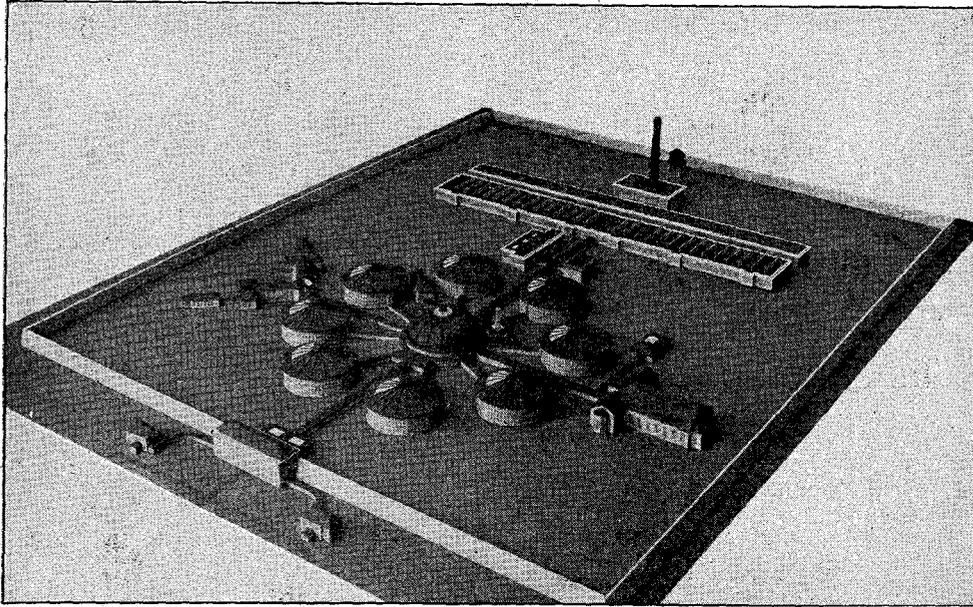


## VOTING BY ELECTRIC SIGNAL

**T**HE FEASIBILITY OF ELECTRICAL VOTING has been under consideration for many years by thoughtful legislators who realize that legislative efficiency is seriously handicapped by the time consumed in recording yea and nay votes. An electric system was adopted in 1915 by the State of Wisconsin and has been in actual use in the capitol at



Illustrations by courtesy of "The Illustrated World," Chicago.

### THE LATEST IN PRISONS. PLAN OF THE NEW JOLIET PENITENTIARY

Madison during the legislative session. At its close every member of the assembly signed a letter declaring the new system "a decided improvement over the old way of voting." The device used in Wisconsin, which is the invention of Burnett L. Bobroff, of Milwaukee, has also been demonstrated in Washington and is said to have received favorable consideration from a Congressional Committee and from individual members. This system, or one like it, the *Des Moines Register* believes, will sooner or later "be installed in every legislature in the United States which is actuated by a desire to speed up public business." To quote from a pamphlet describing the Wisconsin device:

"In all legislative bodies—national, State, and municipal—an enormous amount of time is consumed in taking yea or nay votes. The clerk must call the roll orally (in the United States House of Representatives he calls it twice), the vote of each member must be recorded and the yeas and nays must be totaled. It is a tedious, nerve-racking, time-consuming task.

"During the Sixty-second Congress there were 368 roll-calls taken—each consuming on an average forty-five minutes. Fifty-five legislative days were, therefore, taken up in registering roll-calls alone.

"All that any of these 368 forty-five minute roll-calls accomplished was to place the individual members of Congress on record on some question before the House.

"Had it been possible for the members of Congress to register their votes at the same time and within one minute, or even five minutes, the nation would have gained in the Sixty-second Congress alone over \$360,000 worth of time. . . .

"In its operation the Bobroff system as applied to legislative bodies and conventions is simplicity itself. When a roll-call is announced by the presiding officer, the clerk instantly makes the system ready for active use and each member presses a button or key located at his seat. When the button is pressed the member can see at his seat how he has voted, and his vote duplicates itself on a board in plain view of the whole body—'Yea,' 'Nay,' or 'Present,' as the case may be—by means of lights of different colors (and by letters 'Y,' 'N,' or 'P').

"If the member makes a mistake in voting or wishes to change his vote, he can do so by simply pressing the button which registers his real intent without waiting or wasting time.

"After allowing the time set for voting, the speaker announces that the roll-call is closed. The clerk then presses a button which closes the vote, and immediately a photographic record is produced for future reference and the total yea and no vote is instantly and automatically shown at the clerk's or speaker's desk. The photographic record is by the simple process of etching a reduction in zinc, inserted in the proceedings of the legislative or deliberative body at a considerable saving over ordinary typesetting methods and a positive elimination of all chance of error.

"Assuming that all members press their voting buttons instantly and together, it would be possible to take, count, and permanently record the votes within twenty-five seconds. In actual practise, it should never take over one minute. . . .

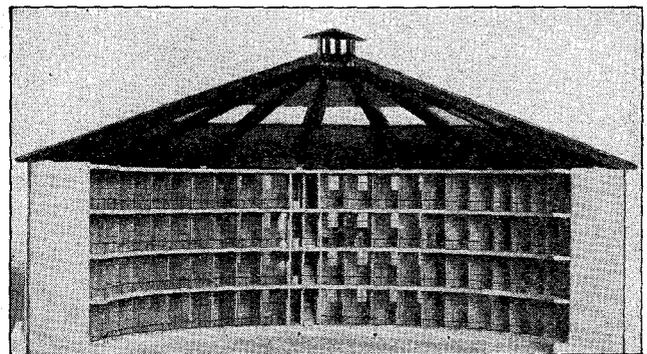
"Electric voting . . . is more accurate than the vocal roll-call, for it prevents errors due to faulty hearing of responses or mistakes in printing or adding.

"In addition to the saving of members' time, it will bring about positively marvelous economies in incidental service costs. By shortening roll-calls it will shorten sessions and thus save telephone, telegraph, light, and heat bills as well as lessen the expense for a variety of forms of labor and service employed when legislative bodies and conventions are sitting."

### A NEW KIND OF PRISON—An

old-time convict, if transported to the new penitentiary buildings now being constructed near Joliet, Illinois, would rub his eyes and wonder, says a writer in *The Illustrated World* (Chicago). He goes on:

"In place of the old-style cells, arranged in straight rows tier above tier, damp, cheerless, and insanitary, he would find a circular arrangement, with well-lighted, well-ventilated cells that are as sanitary as cleanliness and care can make them. A glance at the bird's-eye view of the buildings, shown in the accompanying illustration, will show to what extent the arrangement of the buildings marks a new departure. The administration building at the entrance suggests the conventional arrangement, but everything else is radically different. The buildings are grouped so as to secure the greatest convenience in administration. As all must eat, even in a prison, a large circular dining-room is placed in the central portion; surrounding this are eight circular cell-houses for the prisoners, all connected with the dining-room by corridors. Between these radiating corridors are the kitchen, bakery, private dining-room, office, and guard-rooms, all opening directly into the dining-room. Two large workrooms are placed far in the rear, but are also connected with the dining-room by a corridor. The



CROSS-SECTION OF A CELL-HOUSE AT JOLIET.

warehouses for the storage of raw material and manufactured products are just in the rear of the workrooms. At one side is the chapel, with a stage, a large auditorium, and separate rooms for those of the Catholic and Jewish faiths. Opposite this is the hospital, with special wards for those with tuberculosis and contagious diseases. The laundry and shower-baths are in a building at the left of the long corridor to the workrooms."

# LETTERS - AND - ART

## WHERE SHAKESPEARE HAS A CHANCE

TO FALL BACK ON SHAKESPEARE seems to be the remedy now urged in London for theatrical conditions which are almost as depressing there as they are with us. A whole catalog of reasons and remedies is advanced by managers and press letter-writers to explain and correct the half-empty houses at most of our theaters. While some managers cast a jealous eye at the actor's salary, an acute observer reminds them that "the movies always beckon with a fuller pay-envelop." If other managers heed the protest against high-priced seats and lower the scale, there comes a reminder that "people will not be lured to purchase boredom at a bargain." The bed-rock of the situation reached by this writer in the *New York Evening Post* is that "managers must find better plays." If they are not written in these days, there is supposed to be a dramatic literature, the heritage of three hundred years of the English-speaking theater, headed by one unfamiliar Shakespeare. A little theater in London has been running through war-times to full houses, and one of its managers is the well-known Mr. Ben Greet. To be sure, it has cost but twopence for a gallery seat, and this section of the house has yielded little over a guinea a night. But the seats are never empty. Fifty cents has become almost a stranger-tariff to our metropolitan managers; and among us is a whole world, whose means afford no more, with only the door of the movie to offer a welcome. The current story of the "Old Vic" is given by Mr. S. R. Littlewood in the *London Pall Mall Gazette*. He speaks of it in terms of the National Theater, projected as far back as 1908, for which a fund of \$500,000 was subscribed with a view to seeing the dedication of that institution at the Shakespeare tercentenary in 1916. The war, of course, deferred all that, but—

"The real work of the National Theater—the faithful presentation of Shakespeare and the classics (including opera) before popular audiences, not as a gamble, but persistently and regularly, week in, week out—has been done right through the darkest days of the war by a very different organization. It has been done by the little company at the 'Old Vic,' in the Waterloo Road, under the able management of Miss Lilian Baylis and Mr. Ben Greet. Miss Baylis and Mr. Greet have gone on with their splendid work in the midst of every sort of difficulty, in a shabby old theater in a slum, with theatrical appliances many of them a century old (some of the scenery is said to be older), and before a twopenny gallery, which hardly brings in a five-pound note even when it is chock-full, which it generally is.

"The more one knows, the more one feels that no honor

which true lovers of the theater can pay is too high for Miss Baylis and Mr. Greet. These performances have been not only supremely plucky, but amazingly competent. There has not been within living memory a finer *Macbeth* than that of Mr. Fisher White, at the 'Old Vic.' The acting in the recent revival of 'King John'—produced triumphantly on the very night of one of the rowdiest raids—would have done credit to any West End theater.

"Now, however, thanks to the L. C. C.'s [London County Council] demands, some £7,000 will have to be spent on the old place before it is decreed fit for future dramatic habitation. Accordingly, a great matinée is to be held at the Shaftesbury Theater in the 'Old Vic's' aid. The mere list of those who are to appear—including as it does Miss Ellen Terry, Miss Mary Anderson, Miss Lilian Braithwaite, Mr. H. B. Irving, Mr. Matheson Lang, and all sorts of famous folk—shows clearly enough what the 'profession' thinks of the 'Old Vic' and its value.

"It is here that, as it seems to me, the call to the National Theater Committee is not merely urgent, but insistent. What a chance to be able to announce that, say, £5,000—just one year's modest interest on that £100,000—should be devoted to setting the 'Old Vic' on a new foundation, and turning the Victoria Theater of yesterday into a Theater of Victory for to-morrow!

"I do not suggest that the 'Old Vic' should be made into a national theater. It is only a stepping-stone. So far as bricks, mortar, and associations are concerned, Drury Lane is the national theater of the present, and will be the National Theater

of the future. But, as Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has very well suggested, a national theater would be utterly useless, without a properly trained company—trained, he adds, for choice 'in an outlying popular theater.'

Mr. Jones, above mentioned, writes to the same paper to add a tribute to the work of the "Old Vic," and also to comment on the general project of national theaters with ourselves as a terrible example. We read:

"I entreat the present trustees of the British enterprise to take warning from the gigantic failure of the American National Theater, and not to give ungodly scoffers the brutal pleasure of saying to them, 'I told you so!' over the dismantled and uninhabited remains of some similar piece of wasteful folly.

"Meantime Mr. Littlewood makes a proposal in Friday's *Pall Mall Gazette* that a year's interest on the £100,000 should be devoted to setting the old Victoria Theater on a new foundation. This proposal might, indeed, lead to the establishment of a school of Shakespearian acting in some central position where alone it could hope to be successful.

"On this account Mr. Littlewood's proposal is worthy of cordial approval. But the old Victoria has strong claims on the ground of the Shakespearian work that has been done there during the last few years.

"Often, during the war, it has been for many weeks together



WHAT THE "ABORIGINES" PREFERRED.

T. C. Cook in the melodrama of "Black-Eyed Susan" was preferred to Kean or Henry Kemble by audiences at the Coburg (now the "Old Vic") in 1830. This print is one of the "penny plain, twopence colored" described in Stevenson's essay.