THE EDISON BATTERY.

What Several New Patents Show Regarding the Weakness of the Storage Battery.

Scme interesting statements regarding the long-delayed appearance of the Edison storage battery are given in The Horseless Age, published to-day. After explaining that some recent utterances of the inventor and a number of recently issued patents throw some light upon this subject, the article continues:

"In the first place, the nominal capacity has been reduced from that given in the first description of the new cell by Dr. Kennelly before the American Institute of Electrical Engineers about two years ago, and with the present rating the Edison battery is hardly equal to the best lead batteries as regards specific capacity. As the amount of energy which a certain quantity of the active material is capable of storing is invariable, it must be inferred that it was found expedient to reduce the proportion of active material to the total weight of the cell.

"This inference is confirmed by one of the patents referred to, in which it is stated that the oxidizable element of the cell swells considerably during the process of charging, resulting in the bulging out of the walls of the sheet steel pockets which retain the active material. This necessitated a greater space between adjacent plates, which space had to be filled with electrolyte, thus adding to the weight. Possibly the same action necessitated heavier retaining walls. The present invention aims to overcome this difficulty, but it evidently accomplishes the object only in part, for, although it may not be necessary to space the plates as widely with concave pocket walls as with straight walls, the concave walled pockets will hold less active material, which would seem to reduce the capacity.

"The subject of the other patent is a new admixture of conducting material for the active material. Originally fine flake graphite was used for this purpose. It is now proposed to mix the finely divided iron with mercury and copper, which is claimed to have the same effect on the conductivity of the active material as the graphite, and in addition keeps up the voltage toward the end of the discharge."

The New York Times
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