

TREMENDOUS NEW POWER SOON TO BE UNLEASHED *

Nikola Tesla, Starting His 78th Year, Works on Revolutionary Power Project and Also is Completing Process for Photographing Thought

by Carol Bird

Proving his theory that a man's efficiency and accomplishments should increase, and not diminish with mellow age', Nikola Tesla, inventor, physicist, and one of the world's leading electrical technicians, enters his seventy-eighth year busily engaged on three or four great scientific projects.

Several of these inventions or discoveries will be looked upon as "miracles" by many people, for Mr. Tesla has long been a scientist years ahead of his time, one whose advanced theories have alternately stamped him a "madman" and a wizard.

Just as people ridiculed Copernicus' theory of the planetary system, the unenlightened jeered Tesla's accomplishment, years ago, regarding cosmic rays. The pathfinder and the pioneer - and Mr. Tesla is both - are always condemned by the masses.

Nikola Tesla, tall, lean, with the face of an asthetic and deep-dash set eyes, whose expression denotes concentration on a canvas of work too big for most people's comprehension, partially described a new and inexhaustible source of power he has discovered after years of research, revolutionizing modern physical science. At the same time he touched on his own reservoir of energy which makes such monumental discoveries possible at his advanced age.

How does he tap both these deep wells? What is the secret of fine health, keen mind, unusual vitality and mental force at 77, the time of life when most men are sitting in the sun with shawls over their knees or, alas: lying beneath the sod?

Mr. Tesla is the father of the alternating system of power transmission and radio, the induction motor and Tesla coil.

Asked about his startling new scientific discoveries, one of which concerns the "photographing of thought," which will, he maintains, bring about a tremendous social revolution, he said:

"My first and most important discovery concerns the harnessing of a new source of power, hitherto unavailable, to be developed through fundamentally novel machines of my invention.

"I am not yet prepared to dwell on the details of the project, for they must be checked before my findings can be formally announced. I have worked on the development of the underlying principles for many years. From the practical point of view of the engineer engaged in power development, the first investment will be relatively very great, but once a machine is installed it may be depended on to function indefinitely, and the cost of operation will be next to nothing.

"My power generator will be of the simplest kind - just a big mass of steel, copper and aluminum, comprising a stationary and rotating part, peculiarly assembled. I am planning to develop electricity and transmit it to a distance by my alternating system now universally established. The direct current system could also be employed if the heretofore insuperable difficulties of insulating the transmission lines can be overcome.

"Such a source of power obtainable everywhere will solve many problems with which the human race is confronted. My alternating system has been the means of harnessing 30,000,000 horsepower of waterpower, and there are projects now going on all over the world which will eventually double that amount. But, unfortunately, there is not enough water power to satisfy the present needs, and everywhere inventors and engineers are endeavoring to unlock some additional store of energy."

Beyond adding that the new form of energy which he has been investigating many years would be available at any place in the world in unlimited quantities, and that the machinery for harnessing it would last more than 5,000 years. Mr. Tesla would say little more on the subject. Just when the power will become available for practical purposes he could not predict with any degree of precision. In a few years, perhaps, he ventured to say.

Mr. Tesla then talked of several projects on which he has been working by way of relief from too much concentration on the main piece of work. He described one of his other interests, one highly dramatic, which stirs

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the imagination and which, doubtless, will sound too revolutionary to most people. But it must not be forgotten, as Mr. Tesla points out, that the ideas of television and radio and airplane were scoffed at in their infancy .

"I expect to photograph thoughts," announced Mr. Tesla calmly, in the same tone of voice that a person occupied with some trivial things in the scheme of life might announce that it was going to rain.

Continued Mr. Tesla: "In 1893, while engaged in certain investigations, I became convinced that a definite image formed in thought must, by reflex action, produce a corresponding image on the retina, which might possibly be read by suitable apparatus. This brought me to my system of television, which I announced at that time.

"My idea was to employ an artificial retina receiving the image of the object seen, an 'optic nerve' and another such retina at the place of reproduction. These two retinas were to be constructed after the fashion of a checkerboard with many separate little sections, and the so-called optic nerve was nothing more than a part of the earth.

"An invention of mine enables me to transmit simultaneously, and without any interference whatsoever, hundreds of thousands of distinct impulses through the ground just as though I had so many separate wires. I did not contemplate using any moving part - a scanning apparatus or a cathodic ray, which is a sort of moving device, the use of which I suggested in one of my lectures.

"Now if it be true that a thought reflects an image on the retina, it is a mere question of illuminating the same property and taking photographs, and then using the ordinary methods which are available to project the image on a screen.

"If this can be done successfully, then the objects imagined by a person would be clearly reflected on the screen as they are formed, and in this way every thought of the individual could be read. Our minds would then, indeed, be like open books."

Besides his discoveries concerning the harnessing of the new energy, television and thought photography, Mr. Tesla is working to produce a type of radio transmitter which will insure the strictest privacy in wireless communication regardless of the number of subscribers, and he is developing some important discoveries in molecular physics which will revolutionize the science of metallurgy and greatly improve metals.

After a discussion of his new scientific findings, Mr. Tesla turned to the subject of his personal source of energy and what he considers the real values of life.

"One of the most fundamental and also one of the saddest facts in human life is well brought out in a French proverb which, freely translated, means: 'If youth had the knowledge and age the power of doing,'" said Mr. Tesla "our condition of body and mind in old age if merely a certificate of how we have spent our youth. The secret of my own strength and vitality today is that in my youth I led what you might call a virtuous life.

"I have never dissipated. When I was a young man I understood well the significance of that old French proverb, although I doubt that I had even heard it then. But I seem to have a clear understanding while still young that I must control my passions and appetites if I wanted to make some of my dreams come true.

"So with this in view, quite early in life I set about disciplining myself, planning out a program of living for what I considered the most sane and worthwhile life.

"Since I love my work above all things, it is only natural that I should wish to continue it until I die. I want no vacation - no surcease from my labors. If people would select a life work compatible with their temperaments, the sum total of happiness would be immeasurably increased in the world.

"Many are saddened and depressed by the brevity of life. 'What is the use of attempting to accomplish anything?' they say. 'Life is so short. We may never live to see the completion of the task.' Well, people could prolong their lives considerably if they would but make the effort. Human beings do so many things that pave the way to an early grave.

"First of all, we eat too much , but this we have heard said often before. And we eat the wrong kinds of foods and drink the wrong kinds of liquids. Most of the harm is done by overeating and under exercising, which bring about toxic conditions in the body and make it impossible to throw off the accumulated poisons.

"My regime for the good life and my diet? Well, for one thing, I drink plenty of milk and water.

"Why overburden the bodies that serve us? I eat but two meals a day, and I avoid all acid-producing foods. Almost everyone eats too many peas and beans and other foods containing uric acid and other poisons. I partake liberally of fresh vegetables, fish and meat sparingly, and rarely. Fish is reputed as fine brain food, but has a very strong acid reaction, as it contains a great deal of phosphorus. Acidity is by far the worst enemy to fight off in old age.

"Potatoes are splendid, and should be eaten at least once a day. They contain valuable mineral salts and are neutralizing.

"I believe in plenty of exercise. I walk eight or ten miles every day, and never take a cab or other conveyances when I have the time to use leg power. I also exercise in my bath daily, for I think that this is of great importance. I take a warm bath, followed by a prolonged cold shower..

"Sleep? I scarcely ever sleep. I come of a long-lived family, but it is noted for its poor sleepers. I expect to match the records of my ancestors and live to be at least 100.

"My sleeplessness does not worry me. Sometimes I doze for an hour or so. Occasionally, however, once in a few months, I may sleep for four or five hours. Then I awaken virtually charged with energy, like a battery. Nothing can stop me after such a night. I feel great strength then. There is no doubt about it but that sleep is a restorer, a vitalizer, that it increases energy. But on the other hand, I do not think it is essential to one's well being, particularly if one is habitually a poor sleeper.

"Today, at 77, as a result of a well regulated life, sleeplessness notwithstanding, I have an excellent certificate of health. I never felt better in my life. I am energetic, strong, in full possession of all my mental facilities. In my prime I did not possess the energy I have today. And what is more, in solving my problems I use but a small part of the energy I possess, for I have learned how to conserve it. Because of my experience and knowledge gained through the years, my tasks are much lighter. Contrary to general belief, work comes easier for older people if they are in good health, because they have learned through years of practice how to arrive at a given place by the shortest path."

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