Editorial

LEAD-ACID STORAGE BATTERY INDUSTRY IN INDIA

EVER since Gaston Plante' discovered the lead-acid storage battery in 1859, considerable interest in the same has been evinced by both scientists and technologists the world over. Although a vast amount of work has been carried out during the last one hundred years and more, the fundamental basis of this discovery remains the same. Considerable improvements have, however, been effected on the engineering and technological aspects of the battery with a view to improve its performance in relation to the use to which it is put.

A number of other systems have been found to serve well, as secondary cells also, but the lead-acid system has held its place of pride mainly by its own merit and by virtue of the fact that it is cheap. Even with all the modern developments on solar cells, fuel cells, etc., lead-acid battery is found to keep up its position of importance and utility for some years to come.

In India the lead-acid battery industry has come to be established well, after an initial period of Tariff protection. Opportunities for the growth of the industry are indeed excellent. Some of the established manufacturers have foreign collaboration with well-known firms. Motor vehicle batteries, air-craft batteries, miners' cap lamp batteries and stationary batteries are now being produced in the country. The production of traction batteries and other special types could be taken up by the industry as and when the demand arises.

With demands growing day by day, the industry needs to keep abreast of the latest developments both with regard to improving production standards and also to meet the consumers' demands. The laying down of specifications for various types of batteries by the Indian Standards Institution is only one step in the direction of serving the interests both of the manufacturer as well as the consumer. Application of quality control methods both in the production of batteries and in the purchase of raw materials with adequate facilities for research and testing should help the industry make rapid progress not only in meeting the vast domestic demands but also in capturing some, at least, of the export market.

These are days of research and development in the field of science and technology when countries like U.S.A. are spending annually 16 billion dollars for this purpose. Would not a co-operative research association for the lead-acid battery industry of this country be an appropriate idea at this stage ?

— H. V. K. U.