

# Biggest Wheel of Fortune

## Will Allot \$60,000,000 in Bonuses for Paris City Bond Issue

**A**FTER every great war a speculative fever sweeps the countries affected. In this country Wall Street and the oil fields, some of them yet undeveloped, afford the chief centres of gambling. In Paris, the city is to afford an outlet for the impulse to woo fortune by a kind of bond lottery, in which bonuses running as high as \$250,000 and aggregating \$60,000,000, are to be given to the holders of lucky numbers.

To do this it was necessary to construct a giant "Wheel of Fortune," and the task fell to M. Vico, an engineer living in Colombes, a suburb of Paris. He is a manufacturer of scientific instruments to the Paris municipality, and has been instructed to make a hollow vessel big enough to hold several millions of cartridges, into which it will be impossible even for a child to insert his hand.

Prefect Autrand, Civil Governor of Paris and district, sent for Mr. Vico not long since and said to him:

"See here, Vico, you know the City Council has been authorized by the Congress of France to issue a big liquidation loan so as to enable the city to clear off the big debt it has contracted during the war. The loan will amount to \$300,000,000 (1,500,000,000 of francs) in 5 per cent. \$100 bonds, to be issued exclusively to the public in France and offered at \$96. That means 3,125,000 bonds.

"All these bonds are to be numbered, and are to be gradually paid off at par, that is, at \$100 each, in the course of the next sixty years, by six redemption drawings per annum. The duplicate numbers of the bonds, incased in small brass cartridges, must be locked up in a single urn at the time the loan is issued. At each drawing, apart from the several thousand bonds to be drawn at par, there will also be several hundred bonds to be drawn with important bonuses, ranging from \$250,000 down to \$1,000 each.

"Now, we want you to make for us, as

quickly as possible, a vessel or receptacle in which all these 3,125,000 numbers, sealed up in small brass cases, can be placed. We want the machine so fixed that at every drawing the vessel shall revolve so as to mix up the numbers thoroughly inside, and then discharge from the urn or vessel by electric means as many of the numbers as are required at each redemption drawing.

"Furthermore, we want this machine so constructed that when once the numbers have been introduced into the urn it will be impossible for anybody to fool with them. A child must not even be able to put his hand into the vessel or touch the numbers within. Now, M. Vico, get to work and see what you can do for us."

M. Vico, who all his life has been a great admirer and student of Edison, then produced one of the most remarkable apparatuses ever seen in Europe. It is a huge orange-shaped hollow sphere, the framework of which is of steel, filled in with half-inch thick panes of glass so that the contents of the sphere can be plainly seen.

This monster sphere or "orange," twenty feet high by eighteen feet broad, is supported six feet from the ground by two iron stanchions, which hold the axletree of the sphere at each side. At the top of the sphere is a small aperture or hole no greater in circumference than a man's thumb, and communicating by a short tube with the interior. Into this interior the "cartridges" containing the numbers of the bonds are shot automatically by means of electricity. When they are all in, a little steel trapdoor or breech plug, like the shutter of a camera, and moving almost as rapidly as a snapshot apparatus, is closed by a spring, and an outer brass shutter is clasped to and locked with three patent keys specially made in America and sent for the purpose to France.

The aperture, thus locked, is sealed with white tape, on which is set the great red seals of the city.

When a drawing takes place the huge globe, or sphere, is revolved by means of small wheels, fixed at each end of the axletree, moved by electric power. This mixes up the numbers. When the globe comes to a standstill the aperture, instead of being on top, is below, perpendicular to the floor. The seals are then broken, the outer shutter is unlocked and opened, and an electric "extractor" is slid into a groove which automatically locks the extractor to the aperture. The electric current is then connected, a button is pressed, the inner steel shutter flies rapidly on one side, and one of the little brass cartridges falls through a tube into the extractor or magazine. A second electric button is then pressed, and the tiny cartridge falls through the bottom of the extractor into a long glass funnel on to a table where a thick glass bowl has been set to receive it.

A committee of six officials, generally ward officials selected by ballot for each drawing, is waiting to receive the number. The presiding official opens the "cartridge" with a pair of pliers and reads out this first number drawn. The fortunate holder of the bond bearing that particular number will be entitled to receive a bonus of a million francs, or \$250,000. The following couple of hundred will be entitled to receive lesser sums, but still very large amounts. Next the "extractor" is removed, and a large glass bowl attached to the funnel. Into this are shot, with the rapidity of cartridges fired from a rifle, all the numbers of the bonds to be redeemed at par. Before this monster "orange" is squeezed dry, "bonuses" will have been extracted from it to the value of \$60,000,000.