

FROM INDUSTRIAL-COMMERCIAL WIRING to a project that involves an expenditure of many millions

A small, wiry, soft-spoken Rhode Islander has been assigned the electrical contract on what is probably the greatest war-time development in the East, construction of the huge Rheem Manufacturing Company ship yards at Fields Point, Providence, a job involving the expenditure of millions of dollars and with time more valuable than money.

He is William L. Kelman, proprietor of the C. & K. Electric Company, 46 Ship street, Providence, whose outstanding work in industrial and commercial installations in Rhode Island earned him his chance at this multi-million dollar job that seems to rival gigantic Quonset in scope and importance.

Out of what only a few weeks ago were barren mud flats along the upper Providence river, there has sprung up a miracle city, bustling with activity and with a working population of nearly 3000 men. Daily the number is increasing and the work is advancing inexorably like an incoming tide.

Like a giant jig-saw puzzle, the development changes appearance every hour, almost. Out of the confusion, however, the general pattern is unfolding rapidly, so fast, in fact, that there is considerable hope that the first keel will be laid on the Fourth of July.

Gigantic in Scope

"I am not at liberty, of course, to discuss what is going into the job, but it is a tremendous undertaking," said Mr. Kelman. "Its full scope is not known even yet, but if it doesn't match Quonset it won't fall far short of it.

"And speed is the very essence of the job. It is absolutely vital to get those ships sliding down the ways as fast as humanly possible, or even faster."

The Kelman-headed company is entrusted, on negotiated contract, with the complete electrical installation, including power setup, elaborate underground distribution system, street lighting, the installation of all wiring and fixtures. "Everything electrical," says Mr. Kelman, "down to the last plug and outlet."

But before the actual electrical in-

While the general trend in contracting circles has reached a tempo that, to say the least, is quite alarming, the fact still remains that for those firms who have geared themselves in keeping with present-day conditions, there still exists adequate opportunities for work of an important and desirable nature. We point to the C & K Electric Co., Providence, R. I., contractors. A typical illustration of today's possibilities.

stallations can be made, the buildings must be erected, and here, too, the electrical firm plays an important role, providing lights and power so that the 'round-the-clock working schedule, seven days a week, is not interrupted or slowed.

Special crews of men are assigned to the task of constantly relocating the hundreds of huge floodlights necessary for night work. In addition, field transformers must be set up and taken down continually, to furnish power

for constantly moving cranes, pile drivers, gigantic saws, mighty drills, and every conceivable heavy electrical and motor-driven equipment.

At the outset, Kelman had about 50 electricians on the job, but this number was to be increased to more than 300 to meet the rapidly accelerated pace of the job. New structures seem to spring miraculously out of nowhere overnight, singly and in clusters, like great mushroomrooms, and it is the electricians' job not only to provide light and current for these buildings, but to equip them afterwards, too.

"A City Over Night"

The Providence electrical contractor went on the job on March 27. Except for a small contractor's shed, there was not a structure standing to mar the bleak expanse of flat terrain that stretched almost as far as the eye could see.

Within a couple of hours, four huge, 1500-watt floodlights were erected, power brought in from the utility lines, and before the end of the day, a large administration building was thrown together and almost completely wired. Since then, the pace has never lagged; rather, it has steadily increased.

The first step in the huge undertaking, electrically, was to set up a temporary 1000 kva transformer bank which received 11,000 volts direct from the utility lines and distributed it as 2300 volts to several sub-stations, which in turn fed scores of temporary and portable transformers located profusely in every part of the sprawling many-acre main area.

These temporary setups were necessary to follow the movements of the pile drivers and cranes and other heavy equipment.

"Because of the immensity of the task," explained Mr. Kelman, "the demands for light and power come from widely separated parts of the development. Each separate job is going ahead at full speed, and it seems sometimes as if we hardly get lights and power in place than the building is completed and it is time to move again."

And while one gang is moving the temporary electrical setup, another gang of electricians is working at top



William L. Kelman, alert proprietor of the C & K Electric of Providence, busy at his desk with the 1001 details of his thriving electrical contracting business. Credited with some of the outstanding commercial and industrial installations in Rhode Island, he recently was accorded a negotiated contract for the electrical for the huge Rheem Shipbuilding yards in Providence.

speed putting in the permanent wiring and fixtures in the newly completed building.

An indication of the speed with which the work is progressing was witnessed by your correspondent. While he stood talking with Mr. Kelman in front of electrical headquarters on the job, another large building was started and well underway before the two-hour conversation ended.

Rapid Changes

"It is almost impossible to tell what this place will look like one day from another," said Mr. Kelman. "I have left in the morning and come back in the afternoon to find that a dozen new buildings are underway."

No one really knows just how many buildings there will be eventually, Mr. Kelman said, but there will be scores of them. Many of those going up now are temporary and will come down later for permanent structures.

For instance, one large building, completely wired and equipped with lathes, welding and other machinery, will be used to train shipyard workers, and then will be torn down.

The huge administration just completed was erected in record-breaking time. Scores of big floodlights burned nightly until it was completed, and among the lighting equipment that went into it were 350 Hygrade fluorescent fixtures.

"There is so much equipment it

would be impossible to enumerate even a part of what we have ordered and what will be needed," said Mr. Kelman. "The principal considerations are that it is good material at a fair price and can be delivered promptly. No material, at any price, is any good if it can't be delivered."

The job, incidentally, carries the best priority ratings.

Plans call for the immediate construction of a large cafeteria, 350 feet long, which will probably call for fluorescent, and under way if not already completed, is a gigantic mold-lod, where ship designs are laid out, 560 feet long and 75 feet wide. This, too, may be fluorescent.

Every Detail Is Systemized

Besides the actual installations, which must be carefully supervised, one of the most difficult tasks that confronts the contractor is the organizing of purchasing, so that thousands of separate orders dovetail, and deliveries on the job coincide with requirements. Failure to have the necessary supplies on the job means lost time, which is a cardinal sin in war production.

On the job, Mr. Kelman has several assistants, headed by the ubiquitous, capable and pleasant Arthur Andrews, Jr., general foreman, who seems to be everywhere at once, directing, laying out and speeding the work.

Contractors descend from all directions, demanding lights or power, or

making a hundred other requests; salesmen arrive, order pads in hand; workmen come up for instructions, a thousand and one details demand his prompt attention, and through it all, smiling and unperturbed, "Andy" keeps things flowing smoothly, referring only the larger problems to Mr. Kelman for decision.

Backing up General Foreman Andrews is his equally unruffled assistant, Earl F. Mont.

"On a contract of this magnitude, organization and perfect coordination between office and job is essential," said Mr. Kelman. "We have capable, dependable men in the field and have built up our purchasing and accounting section to meet the demands."

Mr. Kelman has had wide experience in large-scale construction, and a review of outstanding jobs of the past reads like a major section of Rhode Island's business and industrial directory. Firm after firm of prominence is included in the long list of factories and stores that owe their lighting efficiency, or power, or both, to the work of the C. & K. Electric.

Started in 1923

"We have come a long way since our humble beginning back in 1923," said Mr. Kelman. "We have many fine jobs to our credit. Although this Rheem's job is the largest in scope to date, we are justly proud of the many fine installations we have made, and which we will continue to make."

C. & K. Electric has installed lighting in a large percentage of the stores in downtown Providence. Only recently, the concern completed several fine fluorescent installations in the new bus terminal, the China Clipper restaurant, Morse's Shoe Store and a dozen others, all of which are considered fine examples of combined utility and decorative illumination.

In the industrial field, the Kelman concern has been equally prominent. Its floodlighting, general illumination and power installations at the Belmont plant, which is engaged in war production; its elaborate carrier air-conditioning installation at the Dexter Corporation; its outstanding fluorescent installation at the Briar Manufacturing Company, are just a few of the more recent jobs for which the company has been widely praised within the trade.

There is perhaps not a street in the business area of Providence that does not contain at least one Kelman installation. Within almost a stone's throw

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Part of the C. & K. force get final instructions before starting day's work at Rheem's shipyard. Left to right, Arthur Andrews, General Foreman; Mr. Kelman, Earl Mont, Assistant Foreman; George Skirrow and John McCann.

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plant. Charles A. Maguire Associates are the engineers.

The Brien Building Company has the general for the rebuilding of the fire-damaged Belmont Woolen Mills in Woonsocket, including factory buildings and ware houses. Another fire-swept property, the Woonsocket super market, also is being rebuilt.

General Electric floodlights are being installed at the Hammond's Pond Stadium in Pawtucket. The installation is by the New England Machine and Electric Company, with Oren Painter the foreman on the job.

Henry Saule is general contractor on the one-story brick building for the Circular Tool Company in Providence. Julian Falcone of Westerly will soon build a bar and restaurant in that town.

Steeley and Eastman, Warwick contractors, have the electrical for 10 houses in a \$45,000 development under way by Hanson & Erickson, Inc., in Warwick.

The Providence Y. M. C. A. is building a temporary dormitory, bids on which will be sought soon. Glen C. Pierrel is general secretary, with offices at 160 Broad street. Western Coventry Fire District is planning a new station and will solicit bids soon.

Northeastern Mold Company, Cranston, is drawing plans for a \$10,000 addition, which will be one-story, 48 by 77 feet.

Bids also will be sought soon for two schools, one in Middletown and the other in Tiverton. The former will be two stories, with wings, 57 by 215 feet, and containing 14 classrooms, library and cafeteria. The estimated cost is \$384,000. The Tiverton school will cost about \$110,000 and will contain 10 classrooms, office and auditorium.

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of one another in the heart of the city there are Kelman installations in Gilbert's Jewelry Store, Kaufman Hat Company, the Spaghetti Place, a restaurant; Matthewson Toggery Shop, two Liggett Company drug stores, Harris Furriers, Bond Clothing, Scott Furriers, Bernstein's Department Store, Newberry's Department Store, Kay Jewelry and Rogers Jewelry and many others.

Old Customers Are of First Line Importance

C. & K. Electric also does a considerable maintenance work, with a crew

of electricians detailed for that purpose. As the result of its many installations, Mr. Kelman is called upon constantly from satisfied customers to provide service or make changes, and his old customers find him always responsive, regardless of the new work that comes piling in.

"A firm's reputation is based on the quality of its work and the service that it renders," he said. "We never outstrip ourselves so far that we can't take care of old customers and the normal small business that comes our way, although, of course, priorities, are shutting off a lot of small private installations now."

Outstanding work and prompt service, in fact, says Mr. Kelman, helped land the large Rheem job.

C. & K. Electric signed the Rheem job within hours after it was learned that the company planned to locate its shipyard in Providence. Brown & Matthews, the general contractor, was on the job but one day, when Mr. Kelman's firm was selected for the electrical work.

Which goes to prove, if nothing else, that Mr. Kelman is not only a good contractor, but an alert one, too.