

PATHEFINDER

DIGEST OF  WORLD AFFAIRS

January 12, 1935: p. 14

SUNLIGHT DRIVES MOTOR

The New York Electrical Society recently saw a tiny motor run on power obtained from the rays of a 50-watt light bulb. The motor was small, no larger than a man's thumb, and developed very little power. In fact the device is capable of converting only about two per cent of the sun's energy into electricity. It does, however, demonstrate that science is slowly working itself into a position to tap one of nature's great sources of power, the value of which can be realized when it is known that in the sunlight falling on the top of an auto there is enough power to operate the machine, and if converted into electricity the light striking the roof of an average house in one hour's time would supply a family with enough current for cooking, cleaning, lighting, and refrigeration for a week. The device was made by Dr. C. W. Hewlett. Four small, round iron plates constitute the cell which converts the light into power. The plates are coated with selenium over which is an extremely thin layer of platinum. Both of the metals are "light sensitive" and convert certain of the rays into electricity, but as to just how this is done science is pretty vague.