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MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

-----  
Department of Electrical Engineering

Cambridge A, Mass.  
March 7, 1933

Mr. H. P. Charlesworth, President  
American Institute of Electrical Engineers  
33 West Thirty-ninth Street, New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Charlesworth:

Our plans for the celebration of Professor Elihu Thomson's eightieth birthday are now rapidly taking shape. As a member of the Committee on Arrangements you may be interested to learn that we plan a meeting or conference in the afternoon of the 29th, at which occasion talks will be given relating to the theoretical and experimental aspects of modern electricity as well as to some of the historical aspects, with particular reference to Professor Thomson's own achievements. The dinner will be held at Walker Memorial here on the Institute grounds, and in connection with it there will be an exhibit of various old experimental apparatus and early models from the Thomson Museum at the General Electric Company at Lynn. This exhibit is intended to give a concrete picture of the part which Professor Thomson has played in the development of various electrical and other devices.

At the present time we are trying to line up our speaking program for the dinner. It is expected that Dr. Compton will preside and act as host. Mr. George B. Cortelyou will speak from the standpoint of the electrical industries; Governor Ely, on behalf of the citizens of Massachusetts; Mr. E. W. Rice, as one of Professor Thomson's early friends and associates; and Dr. Harvey Cushing, on behalf of scientific professions other than engineering. It is hoped that Dr. Lowell of Harvard will speak for the educational institutions, although as yet this is not definitely settled.

Evidently at an occasion of this sort there should, we believe, be a speaker representing the engineering societies. Since Professor Thomson's principal work has been in the electrical field we believe it would be decidedly fitting if you would consent to speak on their behalf, and we are extending to you herewith an invitation to do so. The speeches should all be brief and it would not be necessary for you to take more than three minutes. Should you accept, we shall expect you to submit the exact title you propose so that it may be appropriately included in our program.

Professor Thomson is, as you know, the recipient of quite a number of medals, of which the Edison and the John Fritz medals come under the auspices of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers.

Mr. H. P. Charlesworth (2)

3/7/33

We have thought that the various medal societies (committees) might be interested in extending to him a greeting suitable to the occasion; for instance, in the form of a letter which could be read at the dinner by the master of ceremonies and thereafter handed to Professor Thomson. With this in view we have written to such bodies, including the Edison Medal Committee and the John Fritz Medal Board of Award.

In most of the cases the medal society (or committee) comes under one of the larger engineering or scientific organizations. It seems that it would be fitting for such organizations, whether or not they have presented Professor Thomson with medals or other honors, to participate in the extension to him of a suitable greeting. In regard to the A.I.E.E. this will of course be taken care of if you accept the invitation to speak. However, we can imagine that perhaps, in addition, the Board of Directors may wish to extend the Institute's written felicitations to Professor Thomson for him to keep.

We are making this suggestion for your consideration, and wish you would let us have your reply, with any comments or suggestions you may wish to give, at an early date. We should be especially pleased if you would accept the invitation to speak.

With regards

Sincerely yours

(Signed) DUGALD C. JACKSON

Dugald C. Jackson, Chairman  
Committee on Arrangements  
Elihu Thomson Eightieth Birthday Celebration

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING



DUGALD C. JACKSON, PROFESSOR  
RALPH R. LAWRENCE, PROFESSOR  
WILLIAM H. TIMBIE, PROFESSOR  
HERBERT B. DWIGHT, PROFESSOR  
WALDO V. LYON, PROFESSOR  
RALPH G. HUDSON, PROFESSOR  
GUSTAV C. DAHL, PROFESSOR  
EDWARD L. BOWLES, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
CARLTON E. TUCKER, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
CLIFFORD E. LANSIL, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
RALPH D. BENNETT, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

LOUIS F. WOODRUFF, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
KARL L. WILDES, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
JAYSON C. BALSBAUGH, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
ERNST A. GUILLEMIN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
MURRAY F. GARDNER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
JAMES L. ENTWISTLE, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
RICHARD D. FAY, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
RICHARD H. FRAZIER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
HAROLD L. HAZEN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
PARRY H. MOON, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR  
HAROLD E. EDGERTON, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

CAMBRIDGE A. MASS. March 7, 1933



To the Members of the  
Edison Medal Committee, A.I.E.E.

H. H. Barnes, Jr.  
C. I. Burkholder  
H. P. Charlesworth (ex-officio)  
Gano Dunn  
F. A. Gaby  
S. P. Grace  
C. Francis Harding  
H. H. Henline (ex-officio)  
J. Allen Johnson  
J. E. Kearns  
A. E. Knowlton

W. S. Lee  
E. B. Meyer  
L. W. W. Morrow  
F. W. Peek, Jr.  
W. S. Rugg  
Harris J. Ryan  
F. A. Scheffler  
W. I. Slichter (ex-officio)  
C. E. Stephens  
R. H. Tapscott  
Percy H. Thomas

Will you approve my writing (as Chairman) on behalf of the Edison Medal Committee, a letter of congratulation to Professor Elihu Thomson on his eightieth birthday? This recognition is appropriate from us because he was the first Edison Medalist. The letter would be presented to him with other congratulatory messages at his birthday celebration.

Kindly let me have your views quite promptly as the birthday comes on March 29th.

Sincerely yours,

*Dugald C. Jackson*

Dugald C. Jackson  
Chairman

*Very dear*

March 8, 1933

Dr. D. C. Jackson, Chairman  
Edison Medal Committee, A.I.E.E.  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology,  
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Dr. Jackson:

I think it is very desirable that you write  
an appropriate letter of congratulations to Professor  
Elihu Thomson upon behalf of the Edison Medal Committee.

Very truly yours,

National Secretary.

HHH:LMW

MR. HENLINE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

33 WEST THIRTY-NINTH STREET

NEW YORK

COPY

March 20, 1933

PROFESSOR D. C. JACKSON  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge A, Massachusetts

Dear Professor Jackson:

This is in reply to your letter of the 7th instant and confirms our telephone conversation this morning relative to the interesting plans being made for the celebration of Professor Elihu Thomson's eightieth birthday. As mentioned in our conversation, I regret that absence from the city and uncertainty as to my own plans resulted in some delay in giving you my final reply. I am pleased to note, however, that my letter was acknowledged in my absence.

With regard to your gracious request for me to speak very briefly on this occasion in behalf of the Engineering Societies and particularly the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, I shall be very pleased indeed to have the honor of doing so and you may proceed with your arrangements accordingly. I shall have clearly in mind the importance of being brief, need for which I can fully appreciate.

Unfortunately our Board of Directors is not meeting in time for me to consider with them the matter of a formal action which would result in extending written felicitations to Professor Thomson. As you mention, however the fact that I am to speak primarily in behalf of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers will adequately convey the greeting but I will consider with Mr. Henline as to whether any further action might advantageously be taken.

With very kind regards and looking forward to the pleasure of being with you all next week, I am,

Sincerely yours,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY  
Mr. H. P. CHARLESWORTH

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS  
33 WEST THIRTY-NINTH STREET  
NEW YORK



TELEPHONE PENNSYLVANIA 6-9220  
CABLE, CYANDRIC

H. P. CHARLESWORTH, *PRESIDENT*

March 21, 1933

MR. H. H. HENLINE, National Secretary  
American Institute of Electrical Engineers  
33 West 39th Street  
New York City

Dear Mr. Henline:

I am attaching hereto a copy of a letter to Professor Jackson relative to the celebration of Professor Elihu Thomson's eightieth birthday.

In Professor Jackson's letter he had the following to say:

"Professor Thomson is, as you know, the recipient of quite a number of medals, of which the Edison and the John Fritz medals come under the auspices of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. We have thought that the various medal societies (committees) might be interested in extending to him a greeting suitable to the occasion; for instance, in the form of a letter which could be read at the dinner by the master of ceremonies and thereafter handed to Professor Thomson. With this in view we have written to such bodies, including the Edison Medal Committee and the John Fritz Board of Award.

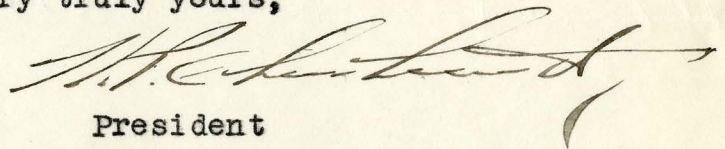
In most of the cases the medal society (or committee) comes under one of the larger engineering or scientific organizations. It seems that it would be fitting for such organizations, whether or not they have presented Professor Thomson with medals or other honors, to participate in the extension to him of a suitable greeting. In regard to the A.I.E.E. this will of course be taken care of if you accept the invitation to speak. However, we can imagine that perhaps, in addition, the Board of Directors may wish to extend the Institute's written felicitations to Professor Thomson for him to keep."

You will note that I have pointed out the impossibility of getting Board action in time but stated I

Mr. H. H. Henline - 2

would consider with you whether any further action might be suggested. Possibly we might schedule some appropriate Board action in May but I am not sure to what extent our Board has ever followed a practice of extending felicitations on the occasion of birthdays of our important members and you will doubtless wish to look this up further.

Very truly yours,



President

Enclosure

Copy of Mr. Charlesworth's  
letter to Professor Jackson  
3/20/33

March 22, 1933

Mr. H. P. Charlesworth, President  
American Institute of Electrical Engineers,  
463 West Street,  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Charlesworth:

In response to your recent request by telephone, I am enclosing a brief statement regarding the Institute activities of Dr. Elihu Thomson, and a few other items which I think will be of interest to you.

Dr. Flinn's memorandum regarding Dr. Thomson's connection with the joint activities of the engineering societies is attached.

If there is any additional information which you desire to receive we shall be glad to supply it if possible.

Very truly yours,

National Secretary.

HHH:LMW  
Enclosures



ELIHU THOMSON

A.I.E.E. Activities:

Charter member; (elected Associate April 15, 1884).

Was transferred to grade of Member 1891.

" " " " " Fellow 1913.

Elected Honorary Member 1928.

Vice-President 1887-89.

President 1889-90.

First recipient Edison Medal, 1909.

He was one of seven members of the first A.I.E.E. Committee on Standardization, which was appointed in 1898, and whose report, approved in 1899, contains the first standards adopted by the Institute.

Author of important technical papers in A.I.E.E. publications.

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Among honors received from other societies, in addition to those named in attached memorandum from Dr. Flinn and those to be supplied by Dr. Calvin W. Rice, the following are of special interest:

Elected Honorary Member, Institution of Electrical Engineers, Great Britain, 1904.

President, International Electrotechnical Commission, 1908-11.

Rumford Medal, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1902.

Elliot Cresson Medal of Franklin Institute, 1912.

Franklin Medal of Franklin Institute, 1925.

Hughes Medal of Royal Society, Great Britain, 1916.

Kelvin Medal of Royal Society, Great Britain, 1924.

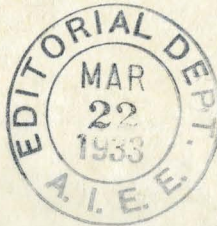
Faraday Medal of Institution of Electrical Engineers, Great Britain, 1927.

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*File in  
J. E. E. E.*

*7/29/33 EE carried notice on p. 203 of March '33*

From: Professor G. C. Dahl  
Secretary of the Committee on Arrangements  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts



For Release after  
March 23, 1933



Final plans for the great dinner to be held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Wednesday, March 29, when leaders in science, engineering, and education will pay tribute to Dr. Elihu Thomson, dean of electrical engineers and inventor, on his eightieth birthday, were announced today by Professor Dugald C. Jackson, chairman of the committee on arrangements.

Within the span of four score years Dr. Thomson, a pioneer in electrical science, has witnessed and played an important part in the development of the country's great electrical industry. He is the last of the magnificent "big four", Thomas A. Edison, Charles F. Brush, and James J. Wood. Three of them gave the people electric lighting systems, Edison invented the incandescent lamp. Today Dr. Thomson is the "last of the first", with more than 700 United States patents to his credit. From 1920 to 1922 Dr. Thomson was acting president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is a life member of its corporation and a non-resident professor of applied electricity.

On the afternoon of Dr. Thomson's birthday there will be a conference of scientists and engineers at Technology, at which brief lectures on the historical development of the applications of electricity, modern theories and the present trends of research will be presented.

President Karl T. Compton of Technology will discuss the historical aspects of electricity with particular reference to Dr. Thomson's achievements in this field. Dr. John C. Slater, head of the Institute's department of physics, will discuss modern theories of electricity, while Dr. K. K. Darrow, noted research physicist of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, will speak on the trends of modern research.

*GRAH*

As part of this celebration, many models and some of the originals of Dr. Thomson's most significant inventions will be on exhibition in the west lounge of Walker Memorial. This exhibition will be open for guests on Wednesday, and will be continued for the public from Thursday to Sunday, inclusive, from 2 to 5 p.m. The models will include the frictional electrical machine made from a discarded wine bottle by Dr. Thomson when he was eleven years old, and a dynamo invented in 1878, which has all the essentials of the great modern generators. Many early types of the arc lamps designed by Dr. Thomson and his colleague Professor E. J. Houston also will be shown. One of the most significant exhibits will be the Thomson Recording Wattmeter, forerunner of the 30,000,000 meters now installed in homes, factories, and stores to record the amount of energy consumed. Early types of lightning arresters will be shown, as well as Dr. Thomson's first electrical resistance welding transformer, a method which is now universally used in almost every branch of manufacturing.

Guests at the great dinner to be held in Walker Memorial will include many of America's most distinguished scientists and engineers, educators, and leaders in the various professions outside engineering, as well as representatives of the professional societies and technical organizations. President Karl T. Compton of Technology will preside at the dinner, at which Governor Joseph B. Ely of Massachusetts will voice the tribute of the people of Massachusetts to Dr. Thomson.

George B. Cortelyou, president of the Consolidated Gas Company of New York, will speak for the electrical industries, while Dr. Harry P. Charlesworth, president of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, will pay honor to the inventor in the name of the engineering societies.

The tribute of educational institutions, many of which have bestowed upon Dr. Thomson their highest academic honors, will be given by Dr. Vannevar Bush, vice-president and dean of engineering of Technology.

Dr. Harvey W. Cushing, the distinguished surgeon, will represent the various professions other than engineering. Mr. E. W. Riee, Jr., honorary chairman of the board of the General Electric Company, its former president, and one of Dr. Thomson's earliest associates in the electrical industry in Lynn, will speak for his friends and colleagues.

The addresses at the dinner will be heard in a nation-wide radio broadcast which will be on the air from 9:30 to 10:00 p.m.

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

33 WEST THIRTY-NINTH STREET

NEW YORK

COPY

*file in folder  
of  
Elihu Thomson*

March 27, 1933

Dr. Elihu Thomson  
22 Monument Avenue  
Swampscott, Mass.

Dear Dr. Thomson:

The celebration of your eightieth birthday is an occasion of special significance to the officers and members of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. In their behalf, I wish to extend sincere congratulations upon your long, varied, and splendidly successful career as a scientist, teacher, and engineer.

Having joined the Institute in 1884 as a charter member, you were recognized as one of its outstanding leaders by your election as Vice-President in 1887, your election as President in 1889, the receipt in 1909 of the first award of the Edison Medal, and your election in 1928 as an Honorary Member. In 1916, the value of your achievements in the entire field of engineering was recognized by the award of the John Fritz Medal by the national societies of civil, electrical, mechanical, and mining engineers.

Your ability in fundamental research and in its practical engineering applications, your sound judgment, and your broad vision have produced achievements which have brought

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

33 WEST THIRTY-NINTH STREET

Dr. Elihu Thomson - 2

COPY

you many high honors, including a considerable number of widely known medals awarded by scientific and engineering societies of the highest standing.

We offer our heartiest felicitations and our hope that you may be granted many more years of health and happiness.

Sincerely yours,

President.

C O P Y



Elihu Thomson  
22 Monument Avenue  
Swampscott, Mass.

May 3, 1933.

Mr. H. P. Charlesworth, President,  
American Institute of Electrical Engineers,  
33 West Thirty-ninth Street,  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Charlesworth:

I appreciate very deeply your letter of March 27th, in which you extend congratulations to me on behalf of the Officers and Members of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. It was particularly pleasant to see you at the dinner, and to have you there as one of the speakers. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology certainly took care of the affair in a most admirable way, their efforts resulting in an outstanding success.

I have just returned from a trip to Philadelphia and Washington, attending the annual meeting of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, and also the annual meeting of the National Academy of Sciences in Washington. These meetings enable one to renew acquaintances with many whose friendship extends back through quite a number of years. There was a particular reason for my going to the meeting of the American Philosophical Society as one of its Vice Presidents, and as happens, in my case, senior member, I having been made a member of the Society in 1876.

With warm personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) ELIHU THOMSON

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

33 WEST THIRTY-NINTH STREET  
NEW YORK



1408

COPY

*File  
Folder of  
Elihu Thomson*

May 5, 1933.

DR. ELIHU THOMSON,  
22 Monument Avenue,  
Swampscott, Mass.

Dear Dr. Thomson:

It was very good of you to write me such a nice letter in further reference to my words of congratulation to you on the occasion of your anniversary in Boston. The celebration was certainly a source of much pleasure and satisfaction to your host of friends and associates and I am pleased to note that it proved so enjoyable from your own standpoint.

I was particularly interested in noting that you now hold the distinctive honor of being the senior member of the American Philosophical Society.

I had hoped that I might see you in Washington but as I was there for only a part of the time, our paths evidently did not cross.

With very kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY  
H. P. CHARLESWORTH

President.