



E. W. Rice, Jr.

(A'87, M'88, F'13, member for life)

President 1917-18

Honorary Member 1933

Edison Medalist 1931

He was born at La Crosse, Wis., May 6, 1862. As a school boy in Philadelphia, he came in contact in 1876 with Prof. Elihu Thomson, then a young teacher in the Boys' Central High School. When, in 1880, Professor Thomson gave up teaching to go into electrical manufacturing as scientist and inventor, young Rice gladly accepted the opportunity to become his assistant.

He went with Thomson to New Britain, Conn., in the old American Electric Company, and in 1883 went with the professor to Lynn, Mass., upon the organization of the Thomson-Houston Electric Company. At the age of 22 he was made plant superintendent and had full responsibility until the consolidation of the Thomson-Houston Electric Company and the Edison General Electric Company in 1892, under the name of the General Electric Company.

In the new company, Doctor Rice was first made technical director, then vice-president in charge of manufacturing and engineering. He eventually became senior vice-president, and, in 1913, he succeeded Charles A. Coffin as president of the company. In 1922, after 9 years' service in that

office, he was succeeded by Girard Swope. Doctor Rice at that time was made honorary chairman of the board, which position he still holds.

He has contributed much, through organization methods, improved factory routine, technical development, and engineering and scientific inventions, to the preëminence attained by the General Electric Company.

His degrees are: honorary A.M., Harvard, 1903; Sc.D., Union College, 1906; doctor of engineering, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1917; Sc.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1924. Doctor Rice is a chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France. In 1917 he was decorated by the Emperor of Japan with the Third Order of the Rising Sun with Cordon.

In addition to having been president, Doctor Rice has served the Institute on several committees, and been its representative on numerous other groups. He is now a member of the committee on economic status of the engineer, and a representative on the Hoover Medal board of award.

Doctor Rice has taken out over 100 patents, many of these being of great importance to the industry. He was one of the earliest to realize the advantages of scientific research, and it was primarily due to his foresight and guidance that the present research laboratories of the company were built up. In addition to his unusual engineering ability, his ability as a business executive is marked; having been in evidence even during the early years.

FOR "his contribution to the development of electrical systems and apparatus, and for his encouragement of scientific research in industry," the Institute's Edison Medal for 1931 was presented to Dr. Edwin Wilber Rice, Jr. Doctor Rice is one of the pioneers in electrical development in the United States, and has played a conspicuous part in the building up of the General Electric Company, of which he is now honorary chairman of the board.