

Harris J. Ryan

(A'87, M'95, F'23, member for life)

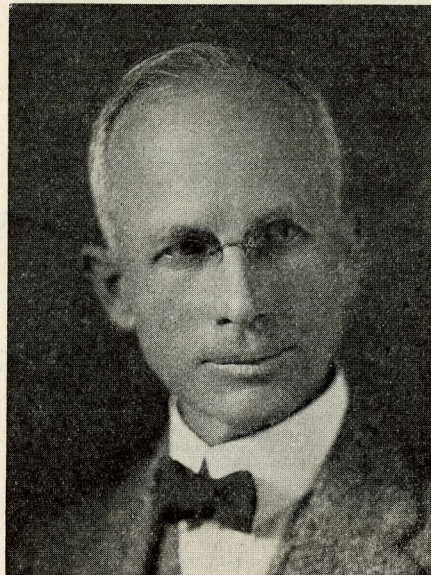
President 1923-24

Edison Medalist 1925

IN 1889, Dr. Harris Joseph Ryan presented before the Institute a paper on transformers, which was immediately recognized as a remarkable one, reaching into the future and exploring the unknown field of high-voltage phenomena. It is the continued exploration of high-voltage phenomena over a period of some 40 years that distinguishes the work of Doctor Ryan.

He was born at Powells Valley, Pa., January 8, 1866. When an electrical engineering course was first inaugurated at Cornell University in 1883, he entered, graduating in 1887 with the degree of M.E. in E.E. For the next 2 years he was associated with J. G. White & D. C. Jackson in general engineering practice at Lincoln, Neb., under the firm name of the Western Engineering Company. In 1889 he returned to Cornell to take charge of the electrical machinery laboratory, and since that time has been concerned principally with scientific research, although he has always been interested primarily in practical applications.

He then started the investigation of high voltages in the laboratory at Cornell, constructing under his supervision much of the equipment necessary. In 1890 he was



chosen assistant professor in electrical engineering, and in 1895, when only 29 years of age, he was appointed professor in full charge of electrical engineering. For a number of years following 1900, he conducted important experiments on the cathode ray oscillograph.

In 1905 Doctor Ryan became head of the electrical engineering department at Stan-

ford University, Calif. Doctor Ryan held this position continuously until 1931, when he retired from active teaching and executive duties. He is now professor emeritus of electrical engineering at Stanford, and honorary director of the Ryan research laboratory.

In the high-voltage laboratory built for him by Stanford University in 1913, much research was carried on which contributed to the present-day success of high-voltage transmission. The Harris J. Ryan high-tension laboratory at Stanford University built in 1926, stands as a fitting monument to the untiring energy and ability of the man whose name it bears.

Doctor Ryan has served the Institute on 11 of its committees, and has been its representative on other bodies. He was manager 1893-96, vice-president 1896-98, as well as president. He also has given his time to several other technical societies.

Doctor Ryan was director of the super-sonics laboratory of the National Research Council, Pasadena, Calif., 1918-19. During 1909-23 he served as consulting engineer for the Los Angeles Aqueduct Power Bureau.

In 1925 the degree of LL.D. was conferred upon him by the University of California. He was judge, board of awards, at the World's Fair, Chicago, 1893; U.S. delegate to the International Electrical Congress, St. Louis, 1904; and member of the jury, Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, 1915.