

Harold B. Smith

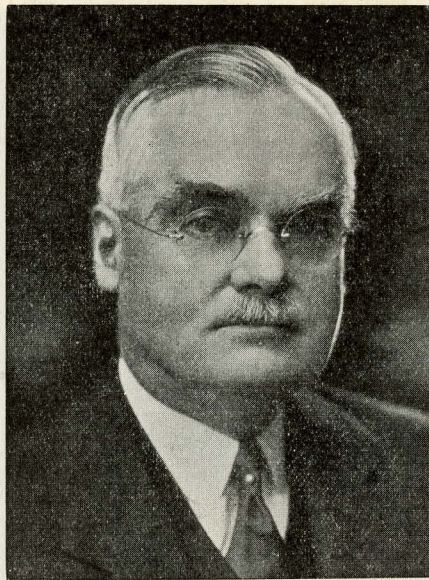
A'91, M'01, F'13, member for life)

President 1929-30

THE career of Harold Babbitt Smith was fundamentally that of an educator, supplemented by engineering research in the field of high voltage, and with consulting engineering practice. He was head of the department of electrical engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute throughout practically its entire existence up to the time he retired in June 1931. He also contributed freely of his time and support to the technical societies.

Professor Smith was born at Barre, Mass., May 23, 1869. In 1891 he graduated from Cornell University with the degree of M.E. in electrical engineering, remaining there as a graduate student several months thereafter.

In January 1892 he was appointed professor of electrical engineering in charge of the department at the University of Arkansas. Resigning from this position in December of that year, he became head designer and electrical engineer for the Elektron Manufacturing Company, Springfield, Mass. During the period 1893-96 he was director of the department of electrical engineering at Purdue University. It was in 1896 that he became professor of electrical engineering and director of the department at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, which



position he held until his retirement in 1931. His death occurred February 9, 1932, at Worcester, Mass.

Professor Smith retained his connection with the Elektron Manufacturing Company as consulting engineer until 1902, and did consulting work for several other organizations at various times. From 1905 until 1931, he had served as a consulting engineer

for the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company.

Professor Smith was one of the pioneers in the development of high-voltage power transmission systems and equipment, and carried on many researches involving dielectric phenomena and stress distribution. He held numerous patents on his inventions, and had contributed many papers to the various engineering societies of which he was a member.

He was chairman of the international group, jury of awards in electrical engineering at the St. Louis Exposition, 1904. During 1917-19, he was an associate member of the Naval Consulting Board and consultant of the special board of the Navy on anti-submarine work.

Professor Smith had served the Institute as manager 1920-24, vice-president 1924-26, and as president. He had served on 13 of the Institute's committees, being particularly interested in the Sections and Student Branches committees, and the educational committee. He had been the Institute's representative on 4 other groups. Professor Smith was a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, Institution of Electrical Engineers (Great Britain), Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Two honorary degrees were conferred upon him in 1929; these were doctor of engineering from Purdue University and from Worcester Polytechnic Institute.