

Friends Honor F. J. Sprague on 75th Birthday

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**Meeting of Appreciation
and Tribute Held for
Electric Trolley Pioneer**

President Sends Praise

**Hedley Broadens Title to
'Father of Rapid Transit'**

Frank J. Sprague, pioneer of the electric trolley, the electric elevator and many electrical safety appliances, was honored last night on his seventy-fifth birthday with a meeting of appreciation and tribute, held in the auditorium of the Engineering Societies Building, 29 West Thirty-ninth Street, attended by internationally known inventors, engineers, educators and industrialists. In addition to addresses, praising the contributions of Mr. Sprague to modern electrical traction, he received messages of congratulations from friends and admirers all over the world, including a note from President Hoover.

President Hoover, writing as an engineer, said in his tribute:

My dear Mr. Sprague: I send you my cordial felicitations on your seventy-fifth birthday and all good wishes for the future.

Your contributions in the development of the electric motor, followed by the application of electricity to street railway and to elevators link your name for all time with the distinguished group of inventors and engineers whose pioneer work made possible so many of our present utilities, comforts and conveniences.

It is fitting that the engineering and scientific world should show general recognition of your noteworthy services to the electric art, and it is with regret that I find I shall not be able to be present at your anniversary celebration.

Yours faithfully,
HERBERT HOOVER.

Work Praised by Hedley

In his address, Frank Hedley, president of the Interborough Rapid Transit Company, emphasized the importance of Mr. Sprague's contributions to the rapid transit system. By his invention of the multiple-unit system of train operation, Mr. Hedley said Mr. Sprague had earned the right to be called "in addition to the 'Father of the Trolley Line,' 'The Father of Rapid Transit.'"

"But he has not rested with the mere inventing or suggesting of new methods," Mr. Hedley continued, "he has recognized that the world is often too busy to pay attention to new and advanced ideas which are considered revolutionary, or to give them a trial unless forced to do so, and he has made it his business to do the necessary forcing. It is fortunate for the electric railway industry that he has made it his business to see that a new idea in which he had faith, was followed through the experimental stage and put into successful use."

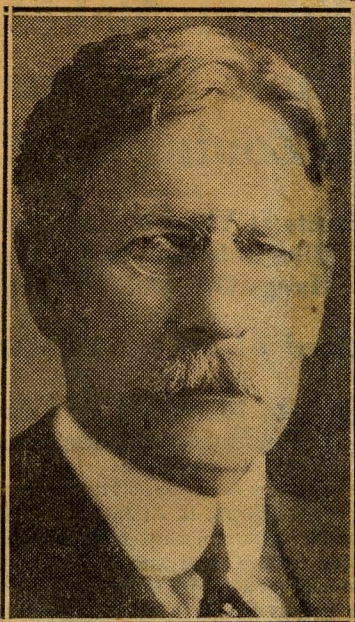
"If I were called upon to name the most powerful influence contributed by Frank Sprague to the railway industry I think I should say it was his pioneering vision, supplemented by his fighting spirit. His vision has been translated into accomplishment to such an extent that transportation, while considered by us a dynamic industry, has become very commonplace in the public mind. The passenger is seldom conscious of the almost miraculous devices employed in carrying him back and forth through the city and country, under rivers and over mountains, with a remarkable degree of safety and comfort."

Robison Lauds Naval Work

Rear Admiral Samuel S. Robison, U. S. N. (Ret.), an old friend of the inventor, presented to him a set of volumes containing more than 500 autographed letters of congratulation received from all parts of the world, with photographs of the writers. Admiral Robison in his speech paid tribute to the contributions of Mr. Sprague to the navy, both as an inventor and as a member of the Naval Consulting Board during the World War.

In his response, Mr. Sprague reviewed briefly his work in the electrical field and in conclusion "ventured a constructive prophecy." He pointed out that although other modes of transportation were becoming more important the railroad remained the "vital foundation of the country." "It would be folly to predict," he continued, "in the present low state of competitive traffic and world wide financial depression, that general electrification is advisable or even permissible in the near future, but if some of the hundreds of millions of capital which the national government is ready to dole out for unproductive public works were diverted to legitimate and sane electric railway equipment a long step would be taken toward economic recovery."

Dr. John H. Finley spoke on the importance of the contribution of Mr. Sprague and other engineers to the world's welfare. Dr. Gano Dunn presided.



Frank J. Sprague