

MR. ROBINET COLE RETIRES AFTER SIXTY- EIGHT YEARS OF SERVICE



On May 31, 1968, Mr. Robinet Cole retired from the Company after a career that spanned almost seven decades. He rendered 68 years and seven months of service to Welsbach, having been hired on October 20, 1899. No other person in the history of the Company has this length of service. On December 6, 1968, he will be 85 years old. He was 15 years old when he was employed as an Office Boy. Our Company was then the Pennsylvania Globe Gas Light Company.

Although gas streetlighting was already an established fact in the United States, most of that lighting until the year 1895 was by "open flame" burner. At the time Mr. Cole was hired, the Company was engaged in converting open flame gas lights to mantle lights. The first commercial use of an incandescent light in America was in Freehold, New Jersey. He assisted in Com-

pany development of gas streetlighting in cities and towns across the country.

As a young man he used to deliver pay envelopes (cash) to employees working in or near center city. He recalled that he would leave the Main Office at Broad and Arch, take a trolley to 19th and Arch, then walk to 1934 Market Street (Factory Office), with an open box containing the pay envelopes. It was perfectly safe to do so at that time! (1904)

He soon started moving up the ladder toward a management position. He proceeded from Office Boy to Order Clerk to Voucher Clerk, to Billing Clerk, and by January, 1904 was Timekeeper and Assistant Paymaster. In 1906 he moved up to Fixture Clerk, in 1914 he became Assistant Chief Clerk, and, in 1918, Chief Clerk.

On the death of Mr. E. Stanley Hart he became Assistant Treasurer, later

came the position of Comptroller, and then Treasurer of the Company. In 1940 he moved into the top echelon of the Company as Vice President and Treasurer. On March 26, 1941, he became a member of the Board of Directors, filling the vacancy created by the death of Mr. Eugene S. Newbold.

In April of 1965 he was named Vice Chairman of the Board. On December 22, 1965, he resigned from the Board on which he had served for 25 years, was elected Senior Vice President, and became Honorary Director. On May 1, 1967, he became Consultant to the President.

He served under five Presidents of the Company—William Finley Brown, Arthur E. Shaw, Eugene S. Newbold, Morse DellPlain and James R. Campbell.

Gas streetlighting, which reached its peak in 1914 when there were some 300,000 gaslights on city streets from coast to coast, gradually gave way to electric streetlighting. By 1935 gas, as a means of municipal lighting, had become almost a memory—a few "pockets of resistance" held on, but, in the main, it was all over.

Welsbach in the mid-1950's had been selling off its inventory of gas lamps, ones removed from city streets as lighting conversion took place. Then, in 1958, alerted to a "rebirth" of gaslighting, Mr. Cole approached Mr. DellPlain, President, and obtained the go-ahead to put the Company aggressively back into the manufacture and sale of gaslamps, posts, burners and parts.

Gaslamp sales, including those of other manufacturers, within a few years, surpassed in numbers of lamps the record of 1914. This time, however, lamps were on patios, lawns and graced driveways—not on city streets. Mr. Cole had watched an era of lighting reach a peak, die out, and 44 years later assist in its return.

His is a remarkable record of devotion to his Company, equalled by a constant concern for his fellow-man. There are no superlatives available to describe his many contributions to the good of Welsbach and its people.

We wish him well as he leaves us to begin another phase of life which, we are certain, he will live to the fullest.