

Reflections Of 40 Years with Water Company

Mr. Llewellyn's Retirement Marked by Gift of Television Set

C.T. July 4, 1952

"So much of our life depends on how we deal with others," was a remark made by Mr. H. Kemp Welch, chairman of the directors of the West Hampshire Water Company, in speaking of the qualities of tact and patience shown by Mr. David Llewellyn during his 40 years of service for the company from which he retired last Monday.

The whole feeling of the dinner given by the directors at the Kings Arms Hotel on Monday evening, which was attended by some 106 members of the staff, reflected that constant objective of good service and good relationship which have accompanied the growth of the company from its very modest size 40 years ago.

The pleasant evening was largely given over to the reminiscing. The present chairman of directors recalled, as a small boy going up to St. Catherine's Hill and throwing stones into the original small reservoirs; Mr. Percy Hazlewood told how he used to have to hold old Mr. John King's pony on which he arrived at the office each Saturday morning to sign the wages cheque. Mr. Joe Hewitt — relatively a new boy, with only 27 years to his credit— spoke of many concessions and kindnesses the staff had received from Mr. Llewellyn. But, of course, it was Mr. Llewellyn himself who drew on the largest fund of recollections — with a wistfulness, sometimes, that tinged his one reference to the future ("I must now try to get used to smoking Woodbines")! When Mr. Llewellyn joined the company — a purposeful and slim young man, so it was said—there were two men on the office staff and three men outside. But there was no telephone in those days. If there were any complaints, or if anyone had a burst pipe, the Water Company would have to wait for a letter to come in by post; they would then hire a horse and cart and go rumbling off through the Forest to put matters right.

WIVES HELPED TOO

At demand note time, continued Mr. Llewellyn, he and Mr. Jim Newlyn, son of Mr. Sambrooke Newlyn, the first secretary and manager, and grandson of Mr. Nicholas Newlyn, the landlord and owner of the Kings Arms Hotel, would work far into the night. Their wives helped, too — without pay — and were responsible in the early days for cleaning up the office. "And many were the times that my wife took out bread and cheese and tea to men who were working out late on emergency jobs.

"I don't suppose any of you remember that," he commented. But from here and there came a proud "Oh yes, I remember!" And a smile spread across the face of Mrs. Llewellyn to whom her husband paid a warm tribute for all her help during all the experiences of his many years of work.

But recollections of this kind were not the only ones to be heard at this function where the warmth of goodwill was adequately matched by the temperature of the ballroom.

400 MILES OF MAINS

Forty years ago, said Mr. Kemp Welch, the company served an area of only about 50 square miles, serving a population of about 11,000 with 80 million gallons a year. They had a couple of steam engines, two pumps and half-a-dozen filter beds long since scrapped. Now, the company served 250 square miles with 1,250 million gallons a year through 400 miles of mains. This progress had been made during Mr. Llewellyn's time and was largely planned and provided for by him.

And in the course of his speech, Mr. Llewellyn (who before the age of 21 had designed and planned railways and roads for the Neath R.D.C. in Wales) referred with obvious and justified pride to some of the equipment he had designed and installed. The hydraulic turbine station ---unique in that it harnesses the full river flow with a fall of only two or three feet and benefited the company by exchanging an annual expenditure of £2,000 on coal for an annual consumption of only four barrels of oil. The diesel engine house and the new circular low lift pumping station — a design which he also thought was unique in the country. His company had been the third in the country to introduce chlorination (in 1912) following an outbreak of typhoid fever in Ringwood.

PLEASANT MEMORIES

On the subject of staff Mr. Llewellyn had many pleasant memories to recall. The easing of pressure on the clerical staff when "the great Percival Hazlewood" arrived at the end of his first six months; the appointment of the late Miss Galbraith in 1914; Mr. Lloyd in 1917; the first foreman, George Morris and the second foreman, Albert Morris. Mr. Llewellyn also mentioned many other members of the staff and Mr. Walter Shaw, present at the dinner, who retired five or six years ago and was the earliest employee of the company present.

Before closing, Mr. Llewellyn asked for the fullest support for his successors —Mr. N. R. Chaplin, B.Com. and Mr. P. H. Ogden, B.Sc. There is no doubt, that his wishes will be fully carried out for, in the course of conversation with several members of the staff during the dinner, there was plenty of evidence of respect and regard for the way the new secretary and the new chief engineer are carrying on the example set by Mr. Llewellyn. That example earned sincere praise from the chairman of the board of directors last Monday night. Mr. Kemp Welch spoke of the mixed feelings with which he contemplated the ending of Mr. Llewellyn's years of work successfully accomplished and ably done. "He has always shown the greatest tact and patience and has set an example we should always be wise to follow — for so much of our life depends on how we deal with others."

Mr. and Mrs. Llewellyn, who were greeted with the warmest applause - the latter especially when she thanked the staff for many kindnesses shown her — were presented with a large console model television receiver.

At the top table, in addition to Mr. and Mrs. Llewellyn, were Mr. and Mrs. H. Kemp Welch (chairman of directors), Ald. J. W. Tucker and Maj. J. D. Mills (directors), Mr. N. R. Chaplin (secretary) and Mrs. Chaplin, Mr. P. H. Ogden (chief engineer) and Mrs. Ogden, Mr. T. J. Williams (solicitor) and Mrs. Williams.

After the dinner a performance of "The Hunchback and the Maid" was given by Mr. Francis Redvers and his miniature theatre.