

# FIRST PRESIDENT OF SMELTER DIES

## R. S. Towne, One of Foremost Mining Operators in Mexico, Succumbs in New York.

Robert S. Towne, well known from his connection with the El Paso Smelting works and his subsequent connection with Mexican mines and smelters, died at the Engineers' club, New York, on August 3, at the age of 58.

In 1883 he left Leadville, Colorado, where he had been engaged in mining and metallurgical work during the "boom" days, and came to El Paso, where he opened up an office in the old Central hotel and engaged in purchasing silver and lead ores from New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico. He thus became the pioneer ore buyer in the southwest. These ores were shipped to the Socorro smelter, then owned by August Meyers of Kansas City, and also to the Kansas City Smelting and Refining company. His business grew rapidly and he foresaw the importance of El Paso as a great center for the metallurgical and smelting business. Interesting Mr. Meyers, then the head of the Kansas smelter, he built a large sampling plant on the site of the Union depot on San Francisco street, and engaged in extensive ore purchasing operations, which culminated in his interesting the stockholders of the Kansas City Smelting and Refining works in building a

smelting plant in 1886 three miles northwest of El Paso, where the present El Paso smelter is located. He was the first president and general manager of the El Paso Smelter company, now one of the greatest reduction plants in the United States, which fixed El Paso forever as a central mart for southwestern and Mexican ores.

Resigning his position and active connection with the El Paso smelter, he entered the Mexican field, where he became one of the foremost operators in mining and smelting enterprises in the republic of Mexico. He was connected with and was main owner of the Fresnillo, Mexican Lead, Montezuma Lead, Gombrette, Tesuitlan Copper, and the Metallurgical Engineering and Process companies and amassed a large fortune, said to have been in the millions. He was a graduate of the Columbia School of Mines. His knowledge of metallurgy and wonderful business ability, judgment and integrity and popularity among miners accounts for his great success. The station of Towne was named after him. The revolutionary troubles in Mexico caused him to close down most of his plants and mines in that country.