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The Great Northern Paper Company, Chapter 13: The Old Company

John E. McLeod

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The Company, of course, never stood still. Continual movement, about which, outside the story of the Madison mill, we have told only little, had been going on everywhere. However, the nature of things as they were at the point we have reached pretty much epitomized the old Great Northern. There had not been many changes in the organizational structure up to that time. From 1928 on, there was a gradual reshaping of this structure and much more physical change, but these things did not affect the character of the Company. There were differences, as time went on, in its relationships with the public, and there were differences in financial policy, but these only helped to strengthen the image of what the Company had become, rather than to establish any new one. The forces which eventually did change the nature of Great Northern came into play just after World War II, but they did not transform it overnight, and for our purposes, it remained what we have called the "old" Company until 1952.

What we have just written makes it seem necessary to try to explain the old Company, to which we have referred so often, for the benefit of those who know Great Northern only as it has been in more recent years.

New policies resulted in changes in plant, equipment and processes in the decade after 1951. These were vast and impressive, and mostly for the better. Later on, still other new policies changed the nature of the Company completely. These things have nothing much to do with our story at this point. What has to do with it is that there were
equally radical changes in internal organization, attitudes and relationships. Old-timers shake their heads and say "things are not the same", implying that they are not as good, which is not necessarily so. The writer, who was actively associated with the Company in one capacity or another for nearly fifty years, twenty of them after 1952, feels that while elsewhere the gains were very great, something in this particular area was lost, and that something was unique.

We do not intend to make comparisons. We will just write as best we can about the way it was in the old Company as we knew it. Some of what we say may be repetitive of what has already been said, or of what will be covered in more detail later, but this chapter will hopefully contain something that will further our story.

In places, what we say may be quite confusing, as although it will be based on the conditions of 1928 or thereabouts, much of it applies in a very general way to a period of thirty years or more prior to 1952. There will be comment in an effort to locate some things in time as we proceed.

Upon Garret Schenck's death, William A. Whitcomb was elected President, and shortly thereafter there were some top-level title changes. The position of General Manager was abolished, and the Managers of the three major departments -- Manufacturing, Spruce Wood and Sales, were made Vice-Presidents, but this did not really effect any organizational change. To avoid confusing explanations, we will use the titles as they were after this time, and we will first try to relate each unit of the Company to the others, leaving the detailed story of each department, as it may need to be told, until later.
In 1929, there were twelve heads of separate organizational units, not all called "Departments", reporting for all practical purposes directly to the President. These were the Manager of Manufacture (Manufacturing Department); the Manager of Spruce Wood (Spruce Wood Department); the Manager of Sales (Sales Department -- the use of the term "Selling Department" had been dropped at some unknown previous time); the Engineer (Engineering Department); the Electrical Engineer; the Auditor (Auditing Department); the Traffic Manager (Traffic Department); the Purchasing Agent (Purchasing Department, for Manufacturing operations); the Treasurer; the Medical Director; the Townsite Agent, and the Superintendent of the Bureau of Economy. The organizations named above as Departments were always called "Departments". They were never, but never, referred to as "Sales" or "Engineering", as they were later. The Medical Director's staff, while this position was in existence consisted of the mill nurses and a couple of part-time doctors, and was not a "department". The Townsite Agent, while there was one who held no other position, had only a secretary. The Bureau of Economy was usually just the "Bureau". Some of these units were service organizations, doing their work mostly through or for other departments. Nevertheless, they were all separate entities, and the people in charge of them were ultimately directly responsible to the President for their performance. There was no Insurance Department as such, insurance matters being handled by the Assistant to the President as long as there was anyone holding that title. The Auditor and the Treasurer -- the latter also having no organization known as a department, were technically responsible to the Board of Directors, but their actual contact was mostly with the President. The Purchasing Agent was technically responsible to
the President, but most of his contact was naturally with the Manager of Manufacture. There was no Personnel or Industrial Relations Department at all. While there were twelve department heads, there were, as we remember, only five men in the entire Company with the title of "Manager". One of these was the Traffic Manager, and another was the Manager of the Great Northern Hotel, both these titles a matter of business custom. The only real "Managers" were the Manager of Manufacture, the Manager of Spruce Wood and the Manager of Sales, all Vice Presidents. Each of these had an Assistant Manager.

In the salaried organization, titles below those of the top men in the non-operating departments were either descriptive of or relative to the job. In the two operating departments, Manufacturing and Spruce Wood, where there were numbers of supervisory positions, there were essentially only three levels below the Vice-President who was the Manager of the department, and these were given either descriptive or relevant titles.

The three major departments, and the minor ones to a lesser degree, were like the denominations of a religious faith. Each worshipped the same God, but was allowed its own peculiar rites and customs, as long as they were consistent with the Gospel according to the President. Therefore, while the Managers had widely divergent personalities, and as a result conditions and relationships were somewhat different in each department, they all resulted in the same attitudes toward the Company.

The Managers of Manufacture, Spruce Wood and Sales had very little to do with each other. Each did his own job independently,
his efforts being coordinated with those of the others by the President, who was the active operating head of the Company and who interested himself in the affairs of all departments, sometimes more than the managers thought he should. There were occasional conferences between the Manager of Manufacture and one of the others on some point of common concern, but these were almost always initiated by and included the President. These three major department heads were seldom together in the same room. This does not mean that there was no communication, but on matters of importance it was through the President, who once said, in the writer's presence; "You can't run this company with a soviet." While the Managers were expected to consult with those under them, they were also expected to make up their own minds, so that except for discussion of some major problem, meetings of even three people which lasted for more than a very short time were frowned upon. We are now referring to the top level people and their peers and immediate subordinates, but this concept was broadly observed all down the line. There were exceptions, of course, and there were staff meetings of a sort, which we will speak about, but the kinds of meetings and conferences which proliferated later were almost unheard-of.

The Engineering Department, the Electrical Engineering Department and the Bureau gave most of their attention to the projects and problems of the Manufacturing Department, although each had its own specific duties as well. The Townsite Agent, who for most of the time we are discussing happened to be the Auditor, had charge of land management in the Towns of Millinocket and East Millinocket, where practically all the land was owned by the Company, and of town affairs in which the Company was involved. He did not have much to do with
Madison, and very little to do with the Spruce Wood Department. The Traffic Department, a scattered organization, lent its help wherever required. The duties of the Treasurer and the Auditor were specialized, the latter, as we have said previously, being something more than a Chief Accountant, and something less than a Controller. Up to this time, he too had little to do with the Spruce Wood Department, except in the preparation of corporate reports. The Spruce Wood Department had been a little empire unto itself, but this situation changed somewhat after 1928. We should perhaps say that there was no single legal eagle, counsel being officially appointed by the Directors in the States of Maine, Massachusetts and New York, but matters of great importance were usually passed upon by Commodore Ledyard's organization. As we have already said, there was no Chairman of the Board, the President having the chair except during the election of officers.

This may seem now like an ungainly and perhaps unmanageable form of organization. It was in fact susceptible of very close control, and was tightly administered. Within the limitations of the people involved, it was highly efficient. There were reasons for this. For one thing, the real decision-making power on important matters in the management area lay in the hands of a very few people -- the President and the Vice Presidents. While the Vice-Presidents each had certain authority in their own fields, delegated to them by the Directors, they were of course responsible to the President, and he made his policies very clearly understood. All three Presidents of the old company were, each in his own way, tough-minded authoritative individuals, but they all related closely with, and were sensitive to, the feel of the organization.
They recognized that dissent from any knowledgeable associate had validity, and was sincerely expressed in what the individual considered to be the interest of the Company, not in the interest of personal empire-building. What seemed therefore to be arbitrary decisions were often arrived at through thoughtful evaluation of the ideas of others. We have used the word "associates". This had true meaning in the old company. The people who made up the organization really thought of themselves as associates in the enterprise. There was full realization of the definite separation of responsibility, and genuine respect for authority, but there was little talk of "superiors" and "subordinates".

For another thing, communications were very good. As we will see later, there were well-defined channels for instructions, questions and answers, about all of which were in writing or confirmed in writing, and almost everything was a one on one situation at its own level, with little or no buffering.

Then, while all the Managers were cast in different moulds, they had certain common attributes. They had come from within the Company, were men of long experience in its service; they knew their business; were usually just a step ahead of the field in their thinking, and they kept any promise they made. Then too, and this was expected of them as a matter of policy, they universally had a sincere interest in those who worked for them -- not just as bodies making up their departments, but as people. There was an unofficial but conscious evaluation of performance all along the line, and a sort of grapevine through which information about those who showed special ability or leadership filtered up to the head office, and every man knew that Big Brother
was watching.

Two other very important factors affected the performance and attitudes of people at all levels. One was that the different areas of responsibility were pretty clearly understood, and there was no crossing of these lines except by those formally delegated to do so. The manufacturing people might complain about the quality of wood being supplied by the Spruce Wood Department; the Sales Department people might grieve about the quality of the paper being shipped by the Manufacturing Department, and the paper room foreman might have hard words to say about the quality of the pulp being furnished to his machines, but these things were done through definite channels, and at specifically authorized levels. The other was that each department head was personally responsible for the performance of his department. He was expected to give credit to those who made it possible for him to make a good showing, but while he could take action to correct any problem within his department, he alone was accountable for failure. He could not pass the blame to a subordinate.

There was what we might call continuity. The old Great Northern was known as "the company that never fires anybody". This was not literally true, of course, but there was a background of truth for legend. While there were some exceptions, most new men were hired at or near the bottom, after careful investigation, not by a personnel officer, but by whoever he was going to work for. Once he was employed, everyone took an interest in him, and helped him when he needed help, having no fear that he might become a rival. If he
did not fit in one position, he was tried in another, and perhaps another still, until the place was found where he could prove himself, if he had anything to prove. Once in a while, of course, there was someone who rubbed people the wrong way, and did not get this kind of treatment. However, the policy was always to salvage the man if possible, not to sluice him, and while this may have resulted in some mediocrity, it also resulted in a whole lot of loyalty.

In the effort we are making to establish the image of the old Company, we are writing at this stage about people, for after all, the character of the Company was and is the result of the interrelationship of the personalities, abilities, attitudes and efforts of people. Even the surroundings of the employees, and the facilities with which they worked, were determined by other people. Later in this chapter we will describe some of the physical conditions which existed, and some of the equipment of the time, but this will be primarily for the purpose of relating the attitudes of Company people to the conditions under which they worked.

The employees of the old Company, as in any company, might be divided into four levels -- the executives, the administrators, the "organization" people, and the work force. The President and the Vice-Presidents were the executives. The other department heads, and the mill Superintendents -- there were no Mill Managers in the old Company, all mill titles being down-graded one step from those found in most other plants -- were, apart from their expertise in their respective fields, administrators of policy. The work force, at the other end of the scale, was completely unionized in the mills.
from an early date and completely unorganized in the woods until a later date. We will talk about this group later.

In between was the "organization", and we are going to say quite a lot about it. It was an amorphous agglomeration of supervisory, administrative, clerical, professional and technical people. They were salaried, and in 1930, the nearest year for which the information is readily available, there were only 179 salaried people in the whole Company. They were in a way, like the N.C.O.'s in the military, the backbone of the outfit. The foremen in the mills and superintendents in the woods camps; the mill office clerks and the President's secretary; the sample boy and the salesman; the photographer and the chemist; the woods paymaster and the forester; the rod man and the designing engineer were all in this group. None of them belonged to any union until very late in the time of the old Company, when most of the office people at Millinocket and East Millinocket were organized; and they were all management-oriented. Some were in routine jobs. Some worked for and closely with officers and officials and were influential in decision-making, and some of these rose to positions of prominence. They were almost all men. Even many of the stenographers and secretaries were men in 1928. Outside of the cutter girls in the Madison mill, the only women the writer recalls in the organization at that time were the telephone operator, some of the hotel staff, and some of the clerical force of Millinocket, and one girl in the Boston office. There were no wage-hour regulations in those days, and the formal distinctions between exempt and non-exempt employees, which resulted in splitting up these people into hourly-paid, weekly salaried and monthly salaried groups had not
been established. At the time of which we write, most of them had a few special privileges, like a little personal time off, for cause, and an indeterminate amount of sick leave with pay. Some were eligible for a small amount of group life insurance. They were allowed to take vacations, filling in for each other for the most part, with a two-week limit. They got no overtime. They had no hospital or medical insurance, and no pensions -- nobody had these things. The stock purchase plan which we have noted was offered to only a selected group, and was no great favor, stock being sold at market, and the money to pay for it being originally loaned at standard interest rates. The salary dividend which we have mentioned was a sort of a fringe benefit, but tenuous, being a year-to-year deal until the early 1930's, when it was discontinued. There were no job descriptions, no formal salary administration system, and no special time for making salary adjustments. The salary list was usually reviewed following any negotiation with organized labor that resulted in a wage rate change. This sometimes produced a general salary increase -- or decrease; more often a selective adjustment, and occasionally no adjustment at all, but if at any time a man felt that he was worth more money, he could ask for it, without prejudice. Good performance could result in monetary recognition or promotion any time, by recommendation. All salary or status changes had to be approved by the President or one of the Vice Presidents, but the recommendation of a department head were usually discussed and agreed upon ahead of the move, and the choice of the department head -- or department heads, if a transfer was involved -- as to who was the best man for the job, was seldom overruled, although suggestions might be made by the higher-ups, who, as we have said, were kept pretty well informed about good prospects.
Department heads and certain other administrative personnel were always chosen by the President or one of the Vice-Presidents. Salary information was carefully guarded in those days, and a man could get a raise without everybody and his dog knowing about it -- at least not right away. This group was, as a whole, as dedicated to the interests of the Company as those in higher authority, and manifested this in effort and performance often beyond the call of duty. These were the people of whom the President once said "There always has to be somebody to do the digging", and he meant it as a compliment to this group.

There was, as among any group of people associated in any enterprise, some injustice, some inequity and some despotism, but this came from human failure somewhere along the line, not from lack of a policy which emphasized fair dealing, equal treatment and the dignity of the individual. People differed about things, but differences were pretty much out in the open, and there was little distrust and less double-dealing. There were personality clashes at all levels, and between levels, and there were some long-standing antagonisms, but at the same time there always seemed to be recognition that there were some good points in the other fellow, and it was not often necessary to knock heads together. Most jobs were not as specialized as they became later. Many made it a point to learn about the activities in areas other than their own, without interfering, and had some understanding of the other man's problems. You did not argue much with your boss in those days, either. You could have a difference of opinion and express it, but if you had to get into an argument to make your point, you were usually wrong. Although old-timers are prone to look back
on the old Company as being a sort of Utopia, it was really not all sweetness and light, but men, when they damned the Company, did so without conviction, believing in it fervently. The environment, as regards working conditions, was almost nowhere as good as it might have been, but this was accepted as the way things were until they could be bettered; and there was work; work beyond the wildest imaginings of anyone who has not been with the Company for more than twenty years as this is written. Apple polishing was not profitable. A man had to produce, and the organization was small enough so that he was under the gun all the time, but he knew that it was expected that he would be given a fair chance, and that top management -- another term never used in the old Company -- expected that any decision affecting his welfare would be made as the result of considered judgment, not necessarily infallible, but seldom prejudiced, and never on the basis of politics.

All of this produced in these people, in all the separate parts of the Company, many of whom had never even seen each other and never would, a respect for themselves and for their associates; a feeling of mutual involvement in something unique; and almost mystical pride in and commitment to the institution called the Great Northern Paper Company, and a strong sense of loyalty to any superior who represented it. They had a sense of purpose toward the achievement of a common goal, each in his own field of endeavor. Long hours meant little to them. They did what had to be done, because that was what they ought to do. This was more than good morale. It was deep-rooted dedication, and if the roots did not take hold early in a new man, he was not Great Northern material. Turnover, particularly in the middle and
upper echelons, was very low, and the occasional man who went to another paper company of his own accord -- there were not many -- was regarded as some kind of a nut.

Mrs. Eckstorm was wrong. The "Great Company" could buy men, although perhaps "buy" is not the right word, because while the old Company paid high wages, it was not noted for paying high salaries, but it made no difference. Great Northern was the greatest. During the time of the old Company many of the conditions we describe changed, but its policies toward its organization and its individual employees did not. The young were willing to learn from the old, the old were willing to teach, and the spirit we have tried to describe was perhaps even stronger in 1952 than it was in 1928. Not every man in the organization was by any means a paragon; there were some crumbs and some gold-bricks, an embezzler or two, and even one who ran a con-game using Great Northern letterheads. The Company's handling of men was not faultless, but it was done with humanity and understanding, and there truly was, in a vast majority of employees at all levels admiration for and dedication to the Company as an institution and as an employer. This resulted in maximum effort to produce maximum results under any conditions. An article in "Business Week" of May 2, 1970, says of a certain company (not Great Northern); "Founded in 1940 (it) has been run by strong-willed executives who put a personal stamp on the operation and built a fiercely loyal team by promoting from within". Maybe this says everything we have been trying to say, in many fewer words, and without the emotional bias which makes some of our fuzzy comment seem almost maudlin.
Now let us examine, as well as we may, the nature of the several departments as they were at that time. We previously rather sketchily indicated the organization at an earlier period, without much information to go on. Records of the kind we need are still hard to come by for the period we have reached, but the writer had then been around for a few years, had had quite a lot of exposure, and has some memory of the times. This will certainly be faulty in some respects, besides, there was constant change, so that as we have said, everything may not relate to exactly the same point in time.

It might be logical to start with the old Spruce Wood Department. As we have pointed out, before 1929 it had been a little empire, having, within the limits imposed by finances, and subjected to Garret Schenck's approval, control over the acquisition of timberlands; and almost a free hand in their management and in the harvesting, purchasing and delivery of pulpwood. It was completely self-sufficient. It had in Bangor its own Purchasing Agent and Purchasing Department, and the Division of Forest Engineering -- with the exception of the short-lived Social Service Division, which we will discuss later, the only unit of the old Company to be called a "division"-- handling forestry, cruising, surveying and mapping, scaling, inspection, cutting records, campsite leases, and the engineering involved in the construction of roads and the like. It had its own Cashier, and an organization of pulpwood buyers, and it did its own construction and maintenance. It had its own Accounting Department, which we will also discuss later, and its own Auditor, until 1928. There was no personnel operation, but there was an employment
office to hire labor for Company camps and for the drives.

After 1929, the Spruce Wood Department retained all its former functions, and there was no drastic change in organization, but under a new Manager it was subject to much closer control by the President than it had been in previous years.

The mills were using about 400,000 cords of wood a year in 1929, and wood procurement activities, including Company and contractor camps and purchased wood operations, spread all over the northern part of the State; along the Kennebec, the East and West Branches of the Penobscot, and the lines of the Bangor & Aroostook, the Maine Central and the Canadian Pacific where it ran across the state. Purchased rail wood was also coming in from New Brunswick, mostly from the area between the border and the St. John River. Little if any wood was being trucked to the mills at this time. There would have been some five thousand men in the woods and in supporting activities at the height of the season. It was necessary to make winter storage piles at the mills, and to carry over wood in the holding grounds above the plants to last until the new drives began to come in, and most of the supply, even some that eventually reached the mills by rail, was river-driven at some stage, there being several loading plants in operation in Aroostook County, to take wood from the water and deliver it into the cars, or into piles for later shipment.

It was considered necessary, or at least desirable, at that time, to allow rough wood to lie over winter in the water whenever possible, first because the barking drum equipment then available would not do a good job on green wood, and second, because it was the opinion that
wood so seasoned gave less trouble from pitch when made into pulp. At the same time, it was the theory that wood sap peeled between May and September -- sap peeling is removing the bark by hand -- left to dry out in the woods and delivered through the following winter, made superior sulphite, as the dry chips allowed better penetration by the cooking liquor; and that pulp produced from sap peeled wood was cleaner than that made from wood that had been drum barked. Therefore, while for economic reasons the bulk of the cut was rough, harvested between the middle of October and the middle of January, or whenever the snow became too deep for cutting, hauled to water during the winter and driven the following spring, a substantial amount of peeled wood was also produced. This was not only for the reasons given above, but because the freight was lower on peeled wood. These conditions resulted in the cut being always at least a year and a half, often more, in advance of use, with a lot of money tied up in inventory, and other complications.

As there was a lot of change in woods operations after 1929, we will take only a quick look at them as they were around that time, and go on from there.

The woods camps of those years were different only in degree from those of older days. They were still built of logs, which were often "stockaded" -- stood on end -- to form the walls, rather than being laid horizontally, but they had board floors, tar paper roofing and screened windows. Most of the bunkhouses by this time were provided with double-tier two-man bunks, but some still had the old-fashioned bed-places and used the long "spreads" in 1929. A few of the larger camps had electric lights from small gasoline generating
units, but in general kerosene and gasoline lamps and lanterns were used for lighting. Wood stoves were universally used for heat and for cooking. There were cooks in all the camps, and food was in general pretty good, but limited in variety and quality to some degree by lack of refrigeration, and by the imagination of different cooks.

A system of improved gravel-surfaced roads had been built by this time -- from Greenville to the Pittston Farm on the west side of Moosehead Lake, and from there eastward to Lobster Lake, across the Seboomook Dam and up as far as Caucomgomac, and westward up the North Branch past Dole Pond to the Canadian border, with a branch to the Canada Falls Dam -- and from Greenville up the east side of Moosehead to the Ripogenus Dam, continuing up past Harrington Lake to Soudnahunk Stream, where an unimproved but usually passable road came up from Millinocket. However, access to practically every camp was still by tote road, good in the winter, but at other times negotiable only by high-bodied tote wagons.

A number of large storehouses for food and other supplies had been built, a distribution system had been established, and most of the camps were connected to a telephone system. Several large farms were being worked for hay, for produce, and for pasturing horses.

Trucks were being used for toting on the main road system and for some other purposes, but very little for hauling wood. Tractors were also busy used for toting and for plowing roads, and tractor trains were being used for long-distance hauling of large quantities of wood, but the horse was still the mainstay of woods transportation.
There were no bulldozed roads, and all hauling, whether by horse or tractor train, was still a winter operation. Both crosscut saws and bucksaws were being used for felling and cutting up trees, and axes were always used for undercutting and limbing. Stump cutting, particularly in heavy stands, was still common, although there was a trend toward yarding to reduce the waste in the hauling roads needed to reach stump-cut piles. As best we can remember, there were no mechanical loading devices in the woods in the time around 1929, and all wood was manhandled onto sleds for hauling, and off the same way at the landings or into freight cars. River driving -- all four-foot wood, of course -- was little different than it ever had been, except that there were more power boats in use.

While at this time most of the wood was being cut by contractors, some with very large operations, there were, as we recall, four top-level Area Superintendents in the field; one on the Kennebec and upper West Branch, one in the Millinocket area and the lower West Branch; one in Aroostook, and the Mechanical Superintendent, operating out of a big new repair shop at Greenville Junction. There were a little million others. Unlike the organization in the mills, almost anybody who had charge of anything from a stream drive to a construction job was a Superintendent. Over all this, in 1929, was Fred A. Gilbert -- "Baron Fred, the lord of men", as Holman Day called him -- with his office at 6 State Street in Bangor. He would soon be gone.

The woods operations of 1929 were only an improved version of those of 1900, but changes, some of which seemed dramatic at the time,
were about to begin. The bulldozer came into the woods in the 1930's making roads, passable for cars and trucks, right to the operations, so that men did not have to stay in the camps all winter, or even on week-ends, for that matter. Portable buildings, with electric lighting, refrigeration and hot and cold running water began to take the place of the old log camps; gradually improved mechanical methods of handling pulpwood were developed, eliminating the back-breaking labor; trucks hauling directly out of the operations superseded the horses and tractor trains and lengthened the working season, and Great Northern woods operations of 1951 were quite different from those of 1929. Never-theless, there were still quite a lot of horses around, the axe and the bucksaw were still the tools of the cord cutter, and while there had been some experimenting with mechanical yarding, the skidder and all the now indispensable mechanical forest monsters were in the future. Woodsmen did not yet wear hard hats as a matter of course, and they still had pitch on their pants, so perhaps things were not so different, after all.

At the other end of the line was the Sales Department at 342 Madison Avenue in New York. This had been a very small organization -- the Vice-President and Manager of Sales, with not more than four or five salesmen, one of whom was permanently stationed in Philadelphia, where the Company had several large accounts, and a couple of men in the office. The salesmen were all-purpose people, performing the duties of both sales and service representation. The Company had been selling only newsprint, a little mill wrapper and some sulphite pulp, and in past years an occasional lot of groundwood. There was a pretty solid list of newsprint customers, many of them small accounts as a matter of long-established policy. The salesman's job was largely to
keep contact with the publishers' business offices and act as trouble-shooter in the pressrooms, and they had all been veterans in the business.

In the period of which we are writing, the Sales Department, like everything else, was changing. There was no Southern newsprint industry at that time, and the Company's territory extended as far south as Miami, and west to Indianapolis. However, Canadian competition was storming at the gates, and the sales people were having to place steadily increasing production in an attempt to compensate for falling prices and rising costs. At the same time, the Madison mill was being converted from newsprint to other papers which required new sales techniques. Young men were being added to the sales force, and an Assistant Manager was shortly to be appointed. Salesmen were having to begin to act more like salesmen and less like order-takers.

There was a small order department, recording and transmitting orders to the mills, by mail and telephone -- there was no teletype connection in those days. It did not schedule orders to the machines. There was frequent direct contact between this part of the sales organization and the mills. Salesmen, however, had had little to do with anyone in the Company outside their own department. Around this time, with the transfer of a couple of manufacturing people to the Sales Department, the growth of the specialty business at Madison and the order shortage of the depression period, a closer association developed between the Sales and Manufacturing Departments at working levels, and particularly with the Boston office.
The Treasurer's operation was the only other regular activity of the New York office on Madison Avenue, which as the writer recalls it around this time, was inadequate and poorly arranged, although it had been then occupied for a relatively short time. The Board Room, for instance, was so small that it must have been hard for all the Directors to fit into it, and there must literally have been some hot sessions, as there was no air conditioning then.

The first Assistant Manager deserves special mention, because of the pathetic circumstances surrounding his short term in office. John M. (Jack) Marshall (1885-1946) was an energetic little man, with only one good eye and a sharp, high-pitched voice. A native of Baltimore, he was another ex-International man hired in 1913 as a bookkeeper -- some of these old titles do not mean much now -- and made a salesman in 1914. He was appointed Assistant Manager of Sales in 1934, and became Assistant Clerk upon the death of H. Merton Joyce in 1935. Some time previous to this, however, he had been badly injured by being struck by a motorcycle, the injury leaving him partly crippled, and aggravating an arthritic condition to such an extent that he refused the position of Manager of Sales, feeling that he could not adequately perform the duties of the job. His condition gradually worsened, and in 1938 he had to give up active work, becoming completely incapacitated and in extreme pain during his last years.

We cannot leave the Sales Department without reference also to Herbert L. Palmer, an eccentric Pittsfield, Maine fruit grower, a part-time dealer in paper and other things. He bore a striking facial
resemblance to Teddy Roosevelt, except that his prominent teeth did not gleam like the Presidential choppers. He had no connection with the Company, but owned a few shares of stock, and faithfully attended stockholders' meetings. He sort of adopted the Madison mill when it began to make specialties, buying odd lots, cull and over-run, mostly market papers, which he sold all over the eastern part of the State. He did much of his traveling what would now be called a "camper", but was a curiosity in those days -- an old truck, fitted up with living quarters. We do not mean to put H.L. Palmer down, but he was a problem. He did help move some stock, but his orders, written on scraps of paper and the backs of envelopes, were almost indecipherable, and as the paper he sold was shipped directly from the mill to his customers, his little orders, running from a few pounds to a ton or so, cost as much to process as large lots. His correspondence was equally puzzling, and his conversation so rambling as to be practically unintelligible. He made quite frequent visits to the Boston office, usually with complaints, and it was comical to see everyone who could, including the brass, take cover when he appeared. However, he was well-meaning, could not be discouraged, and someone had to look after him. This usually was the writer, as the expert on the Madison mill, and as time went on, he became of necessity reasonably proficient at understanding both H.L. Palmer's writing and speech, and his orders and letters were usually sent from New York to Boston to be decoded before any action was taken on them. He was an unforgettable character.

Neither should we forget Fred Mears, mentioned previously in connection with the Madison mill. We have obtained no information on his background. A Williams College graduate, he was hired in 1916
for training, and in the next two years worked with the millwright crew at Millinocket, on the Bureau staff, and as a second assistant to the Superintendent. In 1919, he became Groundwood Foreman at the Millinocket Mill, and in 1925 was made Assistant to the Superintendent at the Lower Mill. In 1928, he went back to Millinocket as Assistant Superintendent, but almost immediately was sent to Madison to take over that mill and supervise the conversion of No. 2 Machine to specialty grades. When Madison was ready to make sulphite specialties in 1929, he was transferred to New York as a salesman for the Madison products. At the time of Jack Marshall's incapacity, Fred Mears was made Acting Assistant Manager of Sales, and in 1938 became in fact Assistant Manager, which position he held for the next seventeen years, the last couple of years in charge of newsprint sales only. In 1955, he retired. He was a friendly, social type, with a lot of ability, and performed good service for the Company, but unfortunately he had a problem, and never quite made the grade.

By modern standards, the Engineering Department of the old Company was an impossibility. It will be recalled that until 1911 it had been under Hardy Ferguson, and had contained men who worked both on his outside projects, and for Great Northern. There is no information as to exactly what organization was set up by the Company when Hardy Ferguson left to establish his own business in New York. It is quite likely that except for changes in personnel it did not differ much from that with which the writer first became acquainted in 1924, and this essentially the organization of the period of which we are writing. It still did not change very much until the approach of the expansion of the 1950's. Many of the people were different by that
time, of course, but to all intents and purposes the operation remained the same.

After 1913, when the old office building burned, the whole Engineering Department was housed in the one large room which took up the ground floor of the east wing of the Administration Building. The Chief Engineer, his secretary and his assistant had desks in the northeast corner. Much later, two small cubicles were partitioned off in that corner, but originally everyone was right in the same room. Drafting tables were ranged around the remaining outside walls, and most of the rest of the room was taken up by a couple of other desks, the files, and storage for the usual paraphernalia and supplies. An old-fashioned vertical arc-light blueprint machine was located in the basement.

The entire Engineering Department staff in 1928, as nearly as the writer can remember, consisted of the Chief Engineer, who used simply the title "Engineer"; his assistant (who was not the Assistant Engineer, but the Assistant to the Engineer -- quite another thing), both working engineers; a secretary, and nine men. They were an exceedingly versatile crew. Almost every job requiring engineering which we have mentioned or will mention in the course of this story, was the product of their effort. There was no Plant Engineering set-up in those days, and they gave advice and assistance on mill maintenance problems. They kept the weather and precipitation records, estimated run-off and controlled water storage; did the surveying and engineering work for the towns of Millinocket and East Millinocket; designed experimental equipment; did all the design for the installation of new or replacement machinery, including whole systems like the grinders and screens, and for major repairs to and even the complete replace-
ment of plant buildings, almost all of these things having to be done without interruption of production. They carried out much of the investigation of equipment and methods for new or replacement programs. They planned and designed everything from a washroom to a hydro-electric station; they specified and requisitioned materials and equipment for capital jobs, and they supervised all construction and the installation of new machinery.

We have said that they were a versatile crew. At the time of which we write, and this remained true through most of what we are calling the old Company period, one man was in charge of water control and the water records, and this meant sometimes actual physical control. The writer has walked with this man out the old tote road to open a gate at the Millinocket Lake Dam -- at midnight. He was also a surveyor. One of the others spent much of his time on hydraulic problems, but he also supervised large construction jobs. One who was the nominal civil engineer also did mechanical design, and the others did everything -- planning, layout, foundations, steel, brick and concrete work, piping, drives -- you name it, they did it. Each man did his own field work and design calculations, estimated the job in many cases, made his own drawings, checked the figures and drawings of others, traced all his important drawings on cloth, and revised the old tracings as changes in which he was involved were made. On top of this, he supervised the construction or installation which he had designed. Every man was a project engineer, field man, designer, draftsman, estimator and construction supervisor. There were no draftsmen who did nothing else, although new men were usually broken in as field helpers, and on checking and tracing.
This Department was not composed of supermen, but they wasted few moves, and looking back on this period, they performed minor miracles. This will be obvious when we get into some of the jobs they did, a little later on. Of course, the volume of work they turned out necessitated the retention of some old-fashioned ideas, and adherence to certain conventions in design. There was not time in most cases to investigate the possibilities of more exotic equipment and methods, or to pay much attention to the niceties of architecture. As an example of what we mean, they largely took what they could get by sticking with one make of bearings, one make of pumps, and one make of valves, just as far as possible. In this way, they got considerable help from the sales engineers for these and other often-used products, and did not have to waste too much time listening to expositions of the advantages of other makes. This did not mean, of course, that different types of equipment or new and improved techniques were never utilized, but the tendency was to stay with that with which they were familiar.

They had an occasional assist from Hardy Ferguson, as consultant, all through his active life, but except on the Ripogenus Dam, as far as we can recall, his help was mostly in the nature of advice, and checking on plans proposed by the Engineering Department, rather than original design. A few studies, notably in the area of steam plant improvement, were made by other outside consultants, but these were rare.

The character of the Engineering Department was pretty much established by the Engineer, Frank Colburn Bowler (1874-1952). A native
of Saccarappa (Falmouth), Maine, and a graduate of the University of Maine, we have already seen that he was active in the design of the Millinocket mill, as part of Hardy Ferguson's team, and had come to Millinocket in 1899, at the start of construction. He was a small, wiry man, with a florid complexion, sandy-red hair, and a square-cornered disposition. He had strong likes and dislikes. He was very jealous of his authority, and had resisted the appointment of an assistant. This was the reason for the title "Assistant to". Roy V. Weldon, the only man to hold this title, was forced on him by the management in 1925; literally fought his way into the activities of the department, not being one to accept the minor role which this title implied; was soon accepted, and became practically indispensible. He later was very prominent in the Company's organization, as we will see.

What happened in this instance contradicts our statement earlier that in the old Company everyone helped the new man, but there were exceptions, and this one worked out well in the end. There was another side to Frank Bowler, basically a friendly man, a lover of music, the theatre and social life, active in the community and devoted to his family. He was understanding with and helpful to the writer, who was the personal contact between him and the Boston office for many years, was at times in the position of having to over-rule him, and did, but recalls with pleasure many field trips with Frank Bowler, usually accompanied by the little wire-haired terrier to which he was much attached.
He was a good, solid, high-safety-factor engineer, and a status quo man by nature. All the time the writer knew him -- nearly 30 years -- he wore tweedy-type suits of almost exactly the same color, and he drove the old Franklin open automobile, with its air-cooled engine, as long as it was made; at breakneck speed for the roads of those days. This was the initial cause of a long-lasting coolness toward him on the part of William A. Whitcomb, who had his scalp split open against one of the bows of the top when the Franklin hit a bump on the cow-path that used to be called Route 16, on a trip from Millinocket to Woodland. This of course was not the whole story. Both strong-minded men, they disagreed on many things, and the fact that the President always had the last word did not sit well with one of Frank Bowler's temperament. Things got so rough between them at one point that he was actually barred from any participation in an important construction job by William A. Whitcomb's special order, but this was an extreme. However, William A. Whitcomb considered him to be a reckless character, and cited the above incident from time to time to prove it. Frank Bowler was far from reckless. He was reactionary by instinct; not that he always put down anything new, but he did not readily accept innovations when there was something time-tested that would do the job. There are many things created under his direction still around, and nothing that he built ever fell down before its time. How about that pulpwood stacker at Madison? Well, to tell the truth, that was only partly erected, and was held together mostly with drift pins at that point, so that does not count.

There have been all kinds of statements about Frank Bowler's actual function under Hardy Ferguson during the Millinocket construc-
tion. In 1899, he was listed as a draftsman, at a rate of $2.50 to $4.50 per day, but was obviously more important than would be indicated by this title as presently used, and the best guess is that he was a design engineer. His diaries, meticulous during the construction period, mention details progress on almost every part of the job, and his knowledge of the Millinocket mill, and of the West Branch as it pertained to power, was fabulous. If anything was not on paper, it was in Frank Bowler's mind. He does not seem to have had anything at all to do with the Company's early rebuilding of the Madison plant, it would appear that he had little if anything to do with the design and construction of the East Millinocket mill in 1906 and 1907, at least judging from the diary entries during the time this mill was being built, these being confined to a very few notes to the effect simply that he visited Burnt Land. He was at this time of course still working for Hardy Ferguson, was engaged in the design and construction of a large sawmill in New Hampshire, and was supervising the construction of the Company's paper storehouse at Stockton Springs. However, he made it his business to find out all about the East Millinocket and Madison plants, and knew almost as much about them as he did about Millinocket. In 1910, still under Hardy Ferguson he had been given the title "Assistant Engineer". In April, 1911, he went on the Great Northern payroll as "Engineer", and in December of that year, which must have been when Hardy Ferguson left, he became Chief Engineer of the Company, at a salary of $250 per month. He held this position actively for almost exactly forty years, until his retirement in January, 1951.
Electrical engineering work was a separate function, not under the Chief Engineer, and there were no electrical people in the Engineering Department. The Electrical Engineer, for almost the entire time-span of the old Company, was Oscar M. Nickerson (1873-1966), who had come from the General Electric Company in 1900 with the new power generating and distribution systems described in connection with the Millinocket and Madison mills. At the time of which we write, he had an office in the old Millinocket boiler house, next to where the electrical repair shop was located. He had no real staff, but worked in close cooperation with the electrical maintenance people at all the mills. Oscar Nickerson was a heavy-set, soft-spoken man, who lived a rather quiet life. Like Frank Bowler, he was conservative, inclined to use equipment with which he was familiar, and knew the peculiarities of every circuit and every piece of electrical equipment in the mills. While not a member of the Engineering Department, his specifications and requisitions for equipment were generally transmitted through it, as a matter of convenience. In emergencies, and there were many in those days, he was never at loss for a solution -- almost never, anyway. He retired in 1947, at the age of 74, married a new young wife, and lived happily a great many years thereafter.

About the time of which we are writing, a lot of electrical work, involving new generating equipment and larger motors than had ever been used before, requiring special control equipment, was being done, and in 1930 General Electric provided another man, Arthur C. Winslow, who was installed as Assistant Electrical Engineer. "Provided" is the right word. The relationship between General Electric and Great Northern...
was such that the Company could ask for a good man from their organization, and get him. Arthur Winslow (1889-1968) was a tall, rangy man, the opposite of Oscar Nickerson in appearance, but like him, quiet, soft-voiced, ingenious -- and diplomatic. He fitted easily into the Great Northern organization, providing the expertise for the installation and operation of the new equipment, and, without throwing his weight around, worked assiduously to improve the obsolescent electrical systems in the mills. He succeeded to the position of Electrical Engineer in 1947, upon Oscar Nickerson's retirement, and in turn retired in 1956.

The departure of Frank Bowler and Oscar Nickerson coincided closely with the end of the era of the old Great Northern, and the beginning of radical change, not only in the engineering and other technical areas, but in the Company as a whole. In the foregoing, we have described the Engineering branch of the old Company poorly, but to the best of our ability. As we have said, the results of its efforts can best be shown in the story of the continual changes made in the mills and in the power systems, which we will take up in other places. In concluding this section, we should perhaps say that there was a Steam Engineer, who was not attached to the Engineering Department either, but to the Bureau of Economy, which we will discuss next.

The name given this department indicated what the management had in mind as its function, which was primarily to test materials used and to monitor certain aspects of the manufacturing operations for efficiency. General order No. 10, dated November 3, 1911, classifies the work required of it as follows:
(a) Paper Test
(b) Stock Material Test
(c) Fuel Test
(d) Fuel and Boiler Efficiency Test
(e) Machine Clothing Test
(f) Operating Materials Test
(g) Test of Lubricants
(h) Test of Wastes
(i) Photographing Test
(j) Mechanical Test
(k) All Other Testing Properly Authorized.

All except (j) and (k) were "routine" tests. No other testing could be done until a Test Report, which was not a report at all, but a request to be allowed to proceed with a test, was signed by the General Manager. What was meant by each of these "classifications" was spelled out concisely in a few lines for each.

Experimental work was also established as a function of the Bureau, but it could make no experiment without the written approval of the General Manager and the Superintendent of the mill involved, and no experiment could be allowed to interfere with production.

This General Order -- there were a great many others -- is an example of what we meant when we said that communication was good, and that everyone knew what he was supposed to do. It was signed by William A. Whitcomb, and in view of something which we will say about him later, it is interesting to note that one of the principal duties under "Photographing Test" was to reduce all tracings made by the Engineering Department to 8-1/2" x 11" by photography.
These regulations were gradually relaxed, and while the Bureau continued to do routine testing, it developed into a rudimentary research organization and a breeding-ground for supervisors. Later, it relapsed again into a glorified testing operation, and had its name changed to "Bureau of Tests" in 1936, but it was metamorphosed in the early 1950's, becoming the Research and Control Department. It had still another name and another place in the organizational structure later on.

The initial organization must have been very small. There is no way of knowing exactly how it was constituted, but from the records, there would seem to have been only four salaried people; the Superintendent, Garret Schenck, Jr., an Assistant Superintendent, a chemist and a clerk. There may of course have been some hourly-paid help, as well. The original Assistant Superintendent and chemist stayed on only a year or two. The clerk was Hervey G. Cram, who has been mentioned previously, and we will finish his story here. Having inventive tendencies, he was released from the Bureau in 1917 to work with Elmer Pope, and returned to it in 1926 as Experimental Engineer. At the time of which we are writing, he was still in this capacity, but was also assisting the Pope Appliance Corporation, which was paying part of his salary. He resigned in 1929 to take a position with a mid-western paper company, later engaging in private consulting work, and in the promotion of some of his inventions, none of which, as far as we know, were eminently successful.

Garret Schenck, Jr. (1883-1925) had been at the Millinocket mill as a chemist in 1907. The Company record seems to indicate a separation, which we are unable to explain, between that year
and 1911, when he organized the Bureau of Economy, but some of the old records were reconstructed after the 1913 fire, and are not complete. He was very popular in the community, took part in everything that was going on, and was considered to be "one of the boys". He is said to have been sort of a fanatic about the old National automobile, and that he encouraged a lot of people to buy this particular car. He was active in the events leading up to the take-over of the Millinocket Light Company, of which he became President. He did a good job in setting up the Bureau and making it an effective unit of the Company and was involved with Elmer Pope in his experiments on the paper machines. In 1918, he was moved to the Boston office as Assistant to the General Manager, but unfortunately there is nothing to indicate his duties or accomplishments in this position, which he held until his untimely death in 1925, except that he was in charge of purchasing for the water and light companies.

He was succeeded in 1918 by F.J. Trimbey (1883-?), hired at that time from the International Paper Company. F.J. Trimbey was a successful inventor, with the Trimbey Consistency Regulator, the Trimbey Stock Proportioning system, both used by the Great Northern Paper Company in all its mills for many years, and other patented devices, to his credit. It is not known exactly what the situation was in connection with his inventions when he came with the Company. They were not assigned to Great Northern, but the writer's recollection is that it had some kind of preferred deal on at least the two mentioned, and the Pope Appliance Corporation later acquired rights to some improvements which were sold to him. He remained in charge of the Bureau only until 1920, and during these two years its efforts
were largely directed toward reduction of stock losses. He left the Company to go into business for himself in **Glens Falls, N.Y.**, under the name Trimbey & Allen. The writer knew him only casually, in later years. He had a pronounced stutter, and William O. McKay once said that he would give anything to see him and Elliott Aldrich, who stammered, carry on a conversation. This did come to pass one day, in the Boston office, and meaning no offence to these two excellent people, it was worth the price.

E.J. Trimbey was succeeded by Charles M. Carrier, who was then employed in the Bureau as Chemist. Charlie Carrier was another man who became very important to the Company, and there will be much more about him in other parts of our story. He was Superintendent of the Bureau in 1928, but transferred to mill operations in that year, and his place was taken by Creighton B. Stanwood, the Steam Engineer at that time. He was still another man who reached a position of prominence in the Company, and there will be more about him also.

We would say that by 1928, and for some years thereafter, the Bureau of Economy was on a high plateau of performance. It still had a small staff, not more than twelve or fourteen people all told, as we recall, including apprentices, but it was routinely testing water, coal, lubricants, sulphur, limerock and other materials used in the mills; checking whitewater losses; making yield tests on pulpwood; keeping records on machine clothing, pulpstone life and performance, and the like; assisting with process problems as requested by the Mill Superintendents, or any of the higher-ups; doing experimental work of various kinds, this including operating the little experimental paper machine which we will tell about later; investigating
new equipment and processes, and generally making itself useful. It was testing pulp and paper samples for the mills daily, more an information service than control. There was no real control organization until 1952. It had "Resident Engineers" at the Madison and East Millinocket mills for direct contact with and assistance to the mill management. It kept documentary photographic records of construction and equipment installation, and of selected day-to-day activities in the mills, the woods and the towns, particularly of unusual incidents or events. It carried out a rather sketchy accident prevention and safety program in the mills, giving first aid instruction and making sure that first aid equipment, stretchers and such, were available, and that fire extinguishers were maintained.

It is really hardly possible to catalog all its activities, but one of its most important services was the administration of the Apprentice Program, under which technically-educated young men were hired--they didn't have to be recruited in those days; they came looking for work and opportunity -- and in addition to assisting in the work of the Bureau itself, were put through on-the-job training in all departments, usually by being assigned as "Apprentice Foremen", and forming a pool from which supervisors and administrative types could be drawn, men generally being matched with jobs in which they had special interest or for which they showed special aptitude. This program was initiated just after World War I, and was very successful. Regular Bureau personnel were also subject to transfer into the mills or other parts of the operation, and many of the leaders of the old Company, in all areas, came from the Bureau.
In 1928, the Bureau had the whole second floor of the east wing of the Administration Building, as explained in the description of this building, and in addition had a small mechanical and pulp and paper testing laboratory in the basement; but, as we have said, things change. In that year, it was evicted from this space to make room for the Spruce Wood Accounting operation being moved from Bangor. The basement laboratory was enlarged and office space was provided by some rearrangement on the ground floor. The chemical laboratory, which had been in the high-ceilinged room on the second floor of the east wing was furnished with basic standard equipment, but in the mechanical and pulp and paper testing laboratories many of the pieces of testing and experimental equipment were home-designed and home-made affairs, and readings from them could not be compared with those from standard instruments. This was not in every case because the Company did not want to spend the money, but because it was sincerely felt that its own people could find some better way to do it. Many test procedures were also Great Northern improvisations, and unique, but with all its handicaps, the Bureau of Economy was a very valuable part of the organization at this point. After 1935, however, when Creighton Stanwood moved into the Manufacturing Department, it began to slip, and did not regain its status until after World War II. We will have more on this later.

Coastwise water shipment of paper had ceased by this time, but the Company still maintained some storage for Boston newspapers -- and had a man located in Charlestown who handled distribution from this storage, worked on car supply for the mills, and traced both outgoing paper shipments and the movement of freight bound for the plants. Another Traffic Agent in Bangor was engaged in car supply, mostly for
pulpwood, and in car tracing, and a third with an office on Nassau Street in New York, was spending most of his time on research for Sheldon Wardwell and the Traffic Manager in connection with the interminable I.C.C. freight rate cases of this period. There may also have still been some paper stored in New York and Philadelphia for newspapers in those cities at this time, but, if so, it was not long before storing for customers was discontinued.

The work being done by the Medical Director has been discussed previously. The Treasurer's job, since there were no financing problems, had become pretty routine. The functions of the Auditing Department, which was really the Accounting Department, were whatever the multifarious duties of accountants, bookkeepers, accounts payable clerks and so on are, and hardly need explaining, even if the writer was capable of doing so, which he is not. Clerical workers were not organized until many years after the time of which we are writing. Records were kept by hand at this stage, there being no office machinery except typewriters, adding machines, a few calculators and some mimeograph machines, until some years later. The Auditing Department administered the salaried payroll. It also kept cost records of a kind, but there was no true cost accounting system in the time of the old Company.

The basic duties of the Townsite Agent, who besides handling the sale of house lots and the like was the link between the Company and the governments of the communities of Millinocket and East Millinocket, seem fairly obvious, the Company owning practically all the unoccupied land in the towns, but there was a lot more to this job than appears on the surface, and there will be more about this in other parts of our story. We have said that the Auditor doubled in this position,
but we are covering a span of some time, and we should pay our respects here to the man who at this point had held the position for some thirty years, but was in declining health and near the end of his life. George W. Stearns (1865-1931) had, as far as the writer knows, no connection with the legal Stearns's in Bangor. He was a native of Colebrook, N.H., had been postmaster in Rumford, served on the school board there, and became principal of the Rumford High School. Here he met Garret Schenck, who brought him to Millinocket in 1900, to take over the duties of Townsite Agent from Charles Mullen. When the town incorporated, George Stearns was elected Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and continued to be elected to that position, unopposed, right up to the year of his death. He was versed in law, but never took the Bar examinations. However, he was the first trial justice of Millinocket, and first Judge of the Municipal Court. According to newspaper accounts at the time of his death, he was elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 1903 and 1905. In 1909, he was elected to the State Senate; was on the Governor's Council during the terms of Governors Baxter and Milliken, and was thereafter principal lobbyist for the Company. Judge Stearns was living evidence that Millinocket was not a Company-dominated town. He was loved and respected by the citizens of the community, who named their High School in his honor, and its athletes have made "Stearns" a name known all over the State to this day.

The Bangor Commercial said of him:

"Mr. Stearns filled many position of responsibility and he filled them all with rare good judgment, but the one which won him everlasting regard of the people of the town was that of first selectman, a position he filled ever
since the town was incorporated 30 years ago. Millinocket grew and prospered under his guidance. He took an abiding interest in everything that pertained to the welfare of the town and community and year after year he was returned to the highest office in the gift of the town, the voters knowing that the town's affairs were safe in his hands as proven by years of faithful and successful service.

Millinocket owes him for its present well-ordered conditions which he had a prominent part in developing from a wilderness to one of the finest villages in Maine, modern in every respect.... He devoted his entire energies to the up-building of the town with a wide vision to the future and excellent judgment, always in close cooperation with the Great Northern Paper Company's interests which were closely interwoven with the town's growth. His excellent judgment and wise counsel inspired unlimited confidence.... (He) was most affable, courteous and a true gentleman, and his death means the loss of a personal friend to very many....

In 1917, Great Northern had been making about 220,000 tons of newsprint a year, with the machines running six days a week. By 1928, on the same operating schedule, the three mills were producing a total of some 312,000 tons of paper a year, almost exactly 1,000 tons per operating day -- Millinocket 625 tons, the Lower mill 290 tons and Madison about 95 tons. When the form of the "new" Company began to emerge, twenty years later, the production of the three plants had increased only to about 390,000 tons a year; 1,275 tons a day, Millinocket turning out around 865 tons, Fast Millinocket 320 tons and Madison 90.
It is not possible to describe the mills at any particular time and say that this is the way it was in the old Company. Physical changes were continuous, programs of improvement were overlapping and were often of several years' duration. We can only say again that all the things that had taken place between 1917, when the conservative Great Northern had emerged and the period we have reached, and all the things that were done in the next quarter-century, did not affect its character nor change its image very much in the minds of its employees, its stockholders or the public.

What we will do, then, is discuss the mills as they were at the time at which we have arrived, give or take a few years one way or the other, looking backward in some places to what had been, and forward in others to what was to be.

From at least the early 1920's until after World War II, when we have said that the things that made the new Company began to happen, the supervisory organizations of the mills, which were determined by functional divisions of responsibility, changed very little in nature or in size, and we will use these organizations as the frameworks on which to hang brief descriptions of the conditions which existed, and the way some things were done under these conditions.

In 1917, apart from the usual settling in that follows new construction, the three plants, from the outside, were not greatly different in appearance from the originals. About all the changes that were visible from outside at the Penobscot mills were the building extension for Nos. 9 and 10 machines at Millinocket and for No. 4 at East Millinocket, and the addition of trestle conveyors for piling short wood. At Madison, there had been no radical changes since
those made at the time Great Northern took the mill over. By 1928, there were some highly visible differences; at Madison the Jenssen acid towers, the enlarged grinder room and the Anson hydro-electric station; at Millinocket Jenssen towers also, and a considerably larger digester building. At Millinocket and the Lower Mill the steam plant buildings had been expanded, and each sported a second brick chimney, and on the wood piling grounds at both of these mills the towers of the suspended cable wood piling conveyors rose against the sky. For the next 25 years or more, there was almost no noticeable external change in the mills themselves -- new fuel oil storage tanks showed up at Madison and East Millinocket; some new transformer stations appeared; transmission structures walked across the landscape from the hydro-electric stations that had been built on the river and the wood pile at Dolby was gone, but that was about all. Today, while almost no part of the plants of the old Company has been demolished, little can be seen of them, except from special vantage points. At Millinocket, the piling towers are gone, but the single brick stack -- the one built in 1899 -- still stands, and the row of groundwood storage tanks is still visible along the bank of Millinocket Stream. Almost everything else is concealed by newer construction. At East Millinocket, a bit of the trainshed, the roof of No. 1-4 machine room and the two brick stacks of the old boiler house, shortened, banded, and with their graceful corbels gone, are visible amid the newer buildings. But this is ahead of our story. We will describe in some detail in another place the changes that took place over the years in both the Penobscot plants.
A. Conan Doyle, at a late point in his book "The Great Boer War" wrote: "To follow in close detail the movements... and the counter-movements... during this period would tax the industry of the historian and the patience of the reader. Let it be told with as much general truth and as little geographical detail as possible. The narrative which is interrupted by an eternal reference to the map is a narrative spoiled." Perhaps so, but the writer, while trying to tell the general truth, finds that he cannot make it even reasonably understandable without including what is equivalent to geographical detail.

Neither could Conan Doyle, as in the earlier part of his history he describes the geography of every battlefield minutely. He had just come to the place where the situation had become utterly confused, defying geographical description. We may be at the same place, but if the reader will try to have patience, we will try not to spoil the narrative.

Some time back in the past, probably when William A. Whitcomb took over as General Manager, each mill had been given a number, as a sort of double identification. The Millinocket Mill was No. 1, the Lower Mill No. 2 and Madison No. 3. We have already told the story of the last in some detail, and things as they were at the time of which we are writing have been described. Let us then take up Mill No. 2, the next largest plant, and this will aid us in explaining the way things were at the big plant at Millinocket when we come to it.

The details of the construction of the Lower Mill, such as are available, have not yet been covered, and at the risk of some repetition later, a brief general description is in order, so that we will better understand what follows. We know that it consisted of two units; a dam and pulp and paper mill at Burnt Land Rips, later called East
Millinocket, and a second dam, with a combined grinder room and hydro-electric station at Dolby Rips, about a mile up-river, this later being referred to simply as "Dolby". Both are rather simple to describe for our present purpose.

Both dams ran approximately north and south across the West Branch, and the plants were at the north end of the dam in each case. At Dolby, there were two major buildings, both brick and steel, with wooden roofs; the grinder and generator room, against the lower side of the main dam, and the wood room, just north of it, immediately below the earth dyke section of the dam. The East Millinocket mill was of course much more complex, but very simple in plan. It too was almost entirely brick and steel construction, with wooden roof decks. The grinder room, as at Dolby, was built against the lower side of the extreme north end of the concrete dam -- and we might note here that much greater use of concrete was made at the Lower Mill than at Millinocket. At the north-west corner of the grinder room was the block tank, originally a wooden structure which by 1928 had been replaced in concrete. From the north end of the dam, a concrete retaining wall ran upstream at a right angle perhaps a hundred feet, and continued as the river side foundation wall of the wood room, a separate building, with the piling ground to the northwest of it. The main mill building, separated from the grinder room by a roadway, was a huge rectangle in basic plan, its long upstream wall an unbroken straight line, parallel with the dam, and in line with the downstream wall of the grinder room. It was divided into rooms which ran straight across its entire width, all in effect one story and basement, the basement floor being at grade at the river end, but excavated full depth at the other.
Starting at the river end was the combined screen and decker room, connected with the grinder room by an underground passage. Next was the machine room, the basement being the beater room as far as the calendar foundations, the remainder the engine room. Then the finishing room, with the storeroom, machine shop and air compressors in the basement. The trainshed was a projection of the north of the finishing room, with the core room and roll grinder room along its west side, and the offices and first aid rooms on the east side. This section was partly unexcavated, and was a little more than half the width of the main mill building. The main line of the railroad passed between the north end of the mill and the highway, continuing on a little distance toward Medway, with spur tracks returning from east of the mill to the trainshed, the beater room and the pulp-stone storage shed attached to the north end of the grinder room, and past this to the wood room. The boiler house was a separate building, set east and west, up-river of the main mill building opposite the engine room, and some little distance from it. To the north of the boiler house was a wooden coal trestle, later used for unloading oil fuel, served by a spur track taking off the main line west of the town, which in 1928 was entirely north of the railroad main line and the highway. A wooden barn was located across the mill yard a little to the north and east of the office. By the time of which we write, some small additions had been made to the mill buildings, but they are not material to this part of our story.

When the writer went to work for the Company in 1924, the plant was less than twenty years old, but while a lot of improvements had been made, much of the original equipment was still in it, and it had reached the point where much more work was required to modernize it.
The Dolby plant was part of the Lower Mill production operation. Called the "Upper Mill" at East Millinocket, to distinguish it from the Lower Mill proper, the grinder room at that time contained 23 two-foot three-pocket grinders on four lines at the river end, and there were three hydro-electric units, with horizontal generators, at the shore end, supplying the Lower Mill with all its electricity. However, the pipe line connecting the two plants had become, as Frank Bowler said, "a hole in the ground lined with rust"; demand for electrical energy was increasing, and plans had already been made to convert Dolby into a hydro-electric station. In 1925, the old generating units had been replaced with equipment of greater capacity and efficiency; the line of grinders next to the generators had been removed, new turbines put in, and a fourth generator (No. 4, the wheels being numbered from the shore end) was installed. This left 18 grinders, on three lines, and this was the situation in 1928. The wood room was provided with a slasher; not what we call a slasher now but two fixed saws mounted in the uptake conveyor from the pond, which cut the four-foot sticks into two-foot "blocks", and trimmed the end of one if it was too long; a small barking drum installation, a conveyor to the block tank in the grinder room, and a conveyor to a timber trestle parallel to the river below the plant, under which the winter supply was piled in two-foot lengths. There was an intake conveyor for bringing this wood back into the grinder room block tank, the reclaiming procedure being much the same as that which will be described later for the Lower Mill. From the block storage, the wood was floated down a long, narrow tank running most of the length of the downstream wall of the grinder room, and was lifted out of this by hand and piled on little rack cars running on industrial tracks the
length of the room and between the lines of grinders. From these racks it was loaded into the grinders by hand. A small waste-fired steam plant provided heat and process steam, and there were water filters, a bull screen, fire and pressure pumps, and a big pump for the pipe line. There were perhaps 50 men employed at Dolby, and for some reason quite a number of people of Finnish and Lithuanian extraction seemed to gravitate to Dolby jobs. There was a little settlement of houses on both sides of the highway which then passed the plant, and there was a Company boarding house, known as the Dolby Hotel, on the river side of the road. Supervision consisted of a Foreman on each shift, reporting to the Groundwood Foreman at the Lower Mill. The conversion of this plant into a hydro-electric station was resumed in 1929, and this job will be covered in another place.

The catch-all word "Supervision" was not used very much in the old Company, for the very simple reason that almost all the responsible supervisors, as we have said, were Foremen. They all reported directly to the Superintendent of the mill, who was the head of the organization, with no one in between, and they had likewise little if any buffering between them and the work force. There was no set form of title to differentiate the men in charge of different phases of the operation, but in the official Salary Records titles were in general as we use them next. In the Lower Mill, the organization, as we recall it, was the Superintendent, an Assistant Superintendent, a Superintendent Night; Foreman Yard, Foreman Wood Room, Foreman Steam, with an Assistant Foreman; Foreman Groundwood, with an Assistant Foreman; Foreman Paper, Foreman Finishing; Foreman Maintenance, locally called the Master Mechanic, and an Assistant Foreman; the Storekeeper
and an Assistant Storekeeper, and the Accountant. We do not recall a Foreman Electricity at this time, but there may have been one. There was often an Apprentice Foreman or two from the Bureau in training at the Lower Mill, attached to one or another of the Foremen, each of whom had a small office in some corner of his bailiwick. There were no "departments" within the plant, in the sense that the word came to be used later, except that the whole maintenance operation was often referred to as the Maintenance Department. There were two "mills", the Groundwood Mill and the Paper Mill, but the various functional divisions, at least inside the buildings, were usually called "rooms".

The duties of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent would seem to be obvious, although we will expand a little on this subject later. The Night Superintendent at the time of which we write, was on duty from nine o'clock at night to seven o'clock in the morning, and until the Dolby grinder room was discontinued and the supervisors from that plant were made Tour Foreman at the Lower Mill, was the only salaried man in the mill at night. Boss Machine Tenders were hourly-paid people until the 1950's.

The Yard Foreman had general charge of the mill grounds and the movement of equipment outdoors; the "dump" which was the outdoor storage of spare and discarded parts and equipment, for which there might be some use, or which might eventually be sold as junk; the motor vehicles, and what was still called the barn. At this time, some horse-drawn vehicles -- low bodied "jigger wagons" mostly -- were still in use, and it had been only a few years since a buggy and and a team of driving horses had been maintained for the use of the
Superintendent. When the writer left East Millinocket in 1927, the
teamster was keeping a family of pigs in a sty under the back of the
barn, as he had done for many years, and a little later was looking
after some goats, which were pastured along the transmission line to
Dolby to keep down the underbrush; a pet experiment of the Superinten-
dent, but short-lived. There were a few light trucks, some heavy
dump trucks engaged much of the time hauling ashes, and two crawler
tractors, one light and one heavy, the latter fitted with an "angle-
dozer" -- a bulldozer blade which could be adjusted so that one end
was ahead of the other. This machine did most of the heavy snow re-
moval -- it was a few years before plows began to be used on trucks --
but there was still a lot of shovel-work around the yard in the winter.

The Wood Room Foreman -- we are now using the titles the way they
were generally used in the mill, rather than as they appear in the
official records -- was in charge of wood preparation, piling and re-
claiming. The Lower Mill was almost entirely on river wood then,
and there were practically no facilities for handling rail wood. Four-
foot sticks from the pond came up a cable haul-up suspended on the out-
side of the river wall of the wood room, and were pulled off this by
men with pickaroons and butted up to the guide on the slasher, to
be sawed in half and discharged into the barking drum. At the time
of which we write, the old saw deck and cut-off saw used in the long
log days were still in the wood room, but unused, of course. From the
drum, properly barked wood was conveyed either to the top of the block
tank for the grinder room, or to the uptake of the suspended cable
piling conveyor. Another conveyor carried wood room waste up to the
boiler house. Wood was reclaimed from the pile during the winter en-
tirely by hand, the frozen pile being dynamited to loosen the wood, which, sliding to the bottom of the pile, was pulled by men with pickaroons onto low portable chain conveyors at right angles to and discharging into the trough or "tunnel" carrying the return of the piling cable, which carried it up an incline and deposited it in the block tank in the grinder room. As a face was created on the frozen pile, the portables were moved along with it on each side of the tunnel, working away from the wood room. Handling wood under these conditions was not the healthiest job around the mill, nor was dynamiting the pile, and the writer was instrumental in doing something about this later.

The raw water pump supplying all the water used by the mill was in the basement of the wood room, the intake screen being only a few feet below the wood haul-up. This may not have caused too much trouble in the days of long logs, but with short wood, the screen had to be raked constantly to keep it clear of bark and debris, and this arrangement was a prolific source of dirt which could not be removed by the filter equipment of the time. Furthermore, the water itself, slightly discolored by the effluent from the Millinocket Mill, and the leaching from the bark pile there, always gave the Fast Millinocket paper a faintly brownish tinge -- enough to make it distinguishable from the Millinocket sheet -- and paper for customers who were fussy about bright color had to be made at the latter mill.

There is not a great deal to say about the boiler house. The steam plant had been added to and worked over several times, and the second brick stack together with a refuse burner, simply for disposal
of wood room waste, not for steam production, had been provided. At this time, the coal-burning boilers, good for 200 p.s.i., were stoker fired. Mechanical coal and ash handling equipment, to bring in the former and remove the latter had been installed, but coal cars were still unloaded by hand on the trestle. At the time of which we have started to write, the Company had no steam-electric power whatever, but in 1929 two 1,000 KW steam turbo-generator units were installed at Millinocket, and in 1930 a similar unit was put into service at the Lower Mill. A larger unit was added at each mill a little later -- "larger" is a relative term in both cases -- and there will be more on these mini-developments and the reasons for them in another place.

There were some interesting things about them. There were of course steam engines driving the paper machines, and a number of other pieces of steam-driven auxiliary equipment which were the responsibility of the Steam Foreman. The hydro-electric plant at Dolby, as is recalled, was manned by people nominally in the electrical section of the Lower Mill but directed sort of jointly by the Electrical Engineer at Millinocket, and the foreman in charge of power production at Fast Millinocket.

The Lower Mill grinder room, where the Groundwood Foreman held out, contained 15 two-foot three-pocket grinders on five lines, numbered from the river end of the room. There had at one time been 18 stones, on six lines, but for some years there had been an experimental four-foot grinder on No. 6 line, and there will be a great deal more later about this. All the grinders, as at Dolby, were driven by water wheels. There were no motors. Also as at Dolby, a long, waist-high tank ran from the block tank the length of the down-river wall, and wood was manhandled from this into the grinders in the same way,
via little rack cars on industrial tracks. Working on the block tank was another hazardous job, as the wood piled up under the discharge of the conveyor to a height of some 30 feet. This pile had to be continually broken down, by men with pickpoles, so that the wood might float down the long tank supplying the grinders, and an occasional slide forced its way out under the suspended wooden barrier protecting the wood polers. Also, any job in the grinder room was wet and cold, in spite of rubber or oilskin clothing. There was an inclined scraper-type bull screen in the corner of the grinder room under the stone storage shed, and in the screen room were Improved knotters, Improved fine screens, and a battery of old-fashioned gravity deckers. In a penthouse over the screen room was a newly-installed Trimbey mixing system for the paper machines, and in the basement the decker chests, pumps, a number of wet machines, and a small Haug refiner for groundwood tailings, one of the very early models. While the paper machines were down on Sunday, the grinder room ran until the system and two outside storage tanks were full of pulp. With no reserve power, it was the custom at both mills to pile out groundwood laps when extra water was available, this being in effect a way of storing water which would otherwise be wasted. At the Lower Mill, the storage pile, served by conveyors, was just east of the screen room.

The Paper Room Foreman had charge of the four machines; which were basically not too much different from those at Millinocket; and everything that pertained to the manufacture of paper. Incidentally, the Lower Mill machines were numbered backward, from right to left, the result of the definite intention to add a fourth machine when the original three-machine mill was built. At the time of which we write,
quite a number of improvements had been made to the original equipment, like adjustable slices, Pope reels, carrier ropes and some suction rolls, but they were still in many ways pretty primitive when compared with the new machines installed in Canadian mills. Automatic broke beaters and a sulphite beater had been installed in 1927, before which time dry broke had been thrown down into basement bins through "broke holes" in the floors between the machines, and was proportioned into the old beaters by hand. Sulphite pulp was received from Millinocket in laps in box cars, which were unloaded, again by hand, onto small trucks which were pushed into the basement, where the laps were again manhandled into the beater, from which it was pumped to a storage tank, and thence to the Trimbey system, consistency being controlled at the beater.

At this time, all the Lower Mill paper was being shipped in rolls, wrapped by hand, the wraps and bands being laid on the floor, the rolls rolled over them, picking up the wrapping on the way; inside heads were put in, the wrapper was crimped down over them, and outside heads were glued on. Rolls were up-ended by overhead cable devices, one for each pair of machines, a wooden head being placed on top of each roll to hold down the paper head while the adhesive cured. A small rotary cutter was provided to cut wrappers and bands. Round heads were made at Millinocket. Trucking to the cars was done with stevedore-type trucks. With the truck upright, its chisel under the roll, a rope passed around the roll and attached to the truck allowed two men to tip the whole business, and the trucker took off with 1,000 pounds or more of paper balanced on two wheels; kept it balanced while the roll was weighed and labelled, and then went on to the shipping platform and into the car, where the stower helped to jam it tightly into
place, using a special pry-bar referred to as a "do-funny". Up until not long before this time, paper in cars had been cross-braced and toe-blocked with pieces of wood nailed to the floor, but starting about 1926, experiments were begun with unit loading, using at first the Gerard system, with round wire, and later Acme or other flat strapping, to tie the rolls tightly together, and in time this method came into general use. The operations of finishing and loading, and the core room, which kept the machines supplied with the proper cores for the orders to be made, were the responsibility of the Foreman of the Finishing Room.

The Master Mechanic of this time was a master improviser. He was in charge of both preventive and breakdown repair, piping and wiring, the installation of new equipment, and all except major construction. He also had charge of the repair shop, which could make, in one way or another, a great many of the parts for almost any machine, although sad to say, there was at this time hardly one really-up-to-date machine tool in the shop. His crew was even capable of building complete pieces of equipment, and did. While acetylene welding equipment was in use, no electrical welding was done at this time, and the repair facility included a forge, with a real old-fashioned blacksmith and a helper. There was a separate tool room with the usual equipment, and one roll grinder, which, as we have said, was not in the shop but up on the level of the machine room floor. There were no work orders or anything of that kind in those days, but there was of course a work schedule and an informal system of priorities. So-called fixed or stationary mechanics -- millwrights and pipers -- were assigned certain locations such as the grinder room, the screen room, the paper room or the boiler house and these men were experts on
repairs in their areas. Part of the machinist crew was of course pretty much permanently in the shop, but almost everyone else in the maintenance crew was assigned where needed, although some with special skills or abilities were often given the same duties regularly. Jurisdictional lines between the various trades were pretty well observed, but were not so restrictive as they became later. The Maintenance Foreman had only the one general assistant, and depended heavily upon his head mechanics in the various trades. He had no engineering help at all in his department and it was sometimes hard to get it when he needed it, except on electrical work, and of course on new installations. This type of organization produced some hybrid equipment which nobody knew anything about except the man who did the job, and it had short-comings, but it was admirably suited to the conditions of the times. One bad feature about it was the lack of any formal training program to produce journeyman mechanics. Helpers learned as best they could, right on the job, and in some trades this was not much. This situation was not remedied for many years.

Due to the isolated location of the mill, the maintenance of an adequate inventory of parts, materials and supplies was of the greatest importance. Each foreman was primarily responsible for his supplies of major materials and parts, making his requirements known to the Storekeeper, who had one clerk and a couple of men on the floor of the store-room. However, the Storekeeper kept a running inventory on all supplies, and as a third precaution, a supply ledger was kept in the main office. As the writer recalls, there was no one in the storeroom at night, but the Night Superintendent had a key, and someone could usually find what might be needed. All requisitions for purchases for the mill were prepared in the storeroom and sent up to
the Superintendent for approval and signature. Requisitions were sent to the Purchasing Department in Boston, and almost nothing was ever bought directly by the Storekeeper or anyone else at the mill. The Storekeeper was not responsible for ordering wood, coal, or the sulphite pulp shipped from the Millinocket Mill. This was looked after by the Superintendent. He was, however, directly responsible for keeping on hand supplies of the multitude of small items used throughout the mill. The store-room force checked copies of the orders made out in Boston against the requisitions, and invoices against the orders, before passing them along to the Auditing Department for payment.

The office section of the mill contained, in order starting from the finishing room, the time office, the main office; a single large room with the pay window next to the time office and a vault in one corner; the Superintendent's office, and the first aid rooms. A transverse corridor, from an outside door to the trainshed, separated the Superintendent's office from the first aid room, giving access to each without going through the main office. The Accountant, in charge of the office, was actually one of the Auditor's men assigned to the mill, but the rest of the office force belonged to the Manufacturing Department. At this time, it consisted of six men -- the specification clerk, who prepared a roll specification -- seven carbon copies-- and a bill of lading for each car of paper; two clerks who scheduled orders to the machines, prepared the daily production report and some cost information, and kept the materials ledger; the timekeeper; the Superintendent's secretary, who did all the typing for the office except the roll specifications; and the sampler, who was also the spare typist and errand boy. He was also a sort of technical assistant,
taking a daily white water sample to be sent to the Bureau for testing; changing the recording charts in the mill; testing sulphite lap samples for moisture content; checking the basis weight scales in the paper room and running a basis weight test and a Mullen test on samples of paper from each shift. He also had to prepare several sets of samples of paper from each day's run -- one for the Superintendent, one for the Bureau, and one for the Boston office. The sample boy soon learned that out of these the poorest went to the Superintendent, to keep him on top of the paper room; better ones to the Bureau, to keep them reasonably satisfied with quality, and the very best to the Boston office, to keep them off the Superintendent's back. This system had him in trouble most of the time with the Paper Room Foreman. He also learned to produce almost any pop test, within limits, that the conditions would seem to indicate. This could be done by turning the wheel on the hand-operated Mullen tester at different speeds.

To assist in computing pay for several hundred employees, the paymaster had a home-made contrivance -- a blueprinted chart of hourly rates, hours worked and weekly wages, mounted on a wooden drum, set in a frame and turned by knobs on the ends, that could be read like a modern computing scale. Up until about 1926, time-cards were made out by hand, and it was a great day when Addressograph equipment was provided for this purpose. The mill crew was paid in cash at this time on Friday, and the pay envelopes were made up in the office Thursday, all hands turning to for this job. However, payment by check was instituted, we believe, in 1929, and payday was changed to Thursday. There was no telephone switchboard at the Lower Mill. The outside connection was through the Millinocket switchboard; and as the writer remembers the only instruments on it were one in the main office and
one in the Superintendents office. However, there was a separate
hand-cranked system for internal communication, and another such
between the office and the railroad station.

The Madison Mill organization was similar to that at the Lower
Mill, except that there was a Foreman Sulphite, and fewer Assistant
Foremen. The original Millinocket mill has been described, and further
description of the layout is not deemed necessary here. Many changes
had been made in thirty years, but only those that affect the condi-
tions we are discussing at this point in time will be mentioned.
It was for our purposes a larger Lower Mill, and the areas of respon-
sibility and supervisory organization were essentially the same.
Millinocket, however, had a sulphite mill, so there was a Foreman
Sulphite and an Assistant Foreman, and because this was a large plant,
and a critical part of the operation, a Foreman Sulphite Night. Also
because of the size of the mill there was a Foreman Groundwood Night,
a Foreman Paper Night, a Foreman Electrical Maintenance, and a Foreman
Pipers. There were also some Apprentice Foremen. It seems to us that
in this mill a few of the Foremen, and we have in mind particularly
those in the Sulphite and Groundwood mills, were sometimes referred
to as Superintendents, but this was unofficial.

There was a barn at Millinocket, a wooden structure located
nearly in front of where the Engineering and Research building was
constructed later, but the writer is not sure that there were any
horses in use at Millinocket at this time. This building was origin-
ally the pavillion at the baseball field. There were trucks of various
kinds, a number of tractors, some with angle-dozers, and one Company
car, with a full-time driver, primarily for the use of the mill Super-
intendent and visiting dignitaries.

The Millinocket mill was supplied with both river and rail wood, all four-foot, of course, and it had been receiving some chips from the Madawaska Company at Keegan, in Aroostook County, operated by Edouard Lacroix, one of the Company's large contractors. A pneumatic system had been installed in the wood room a few years before to unload these, but this operation was about at an end in 1928.

Two barking drums had been installed outdoors at Ferguson Pond, and sluices from these had been arranged to deliver barked wood into the mill yard pond, or into either of two piles for storage. A spur track had been run down to Millinocket Stream at a point below the mill near where the old log sluice from the canal emptied. This spur ran across a trestle built over a logan there, into which rail wood could be dumped into the water for floating down to the Lower Mill, along with wood which had been sluiced down from Ferguson Pond into the mill yard pond, and thence through another sluice to Millinocket Stream. The big old log sluice was used at this time only for getting rid of dri-ki.

The grinder room was still using the old two-foot, three-pocket grinders -- there were 72 of them on the six lines; and while four-foot wood was chipped, there were two slashers in the uptake from the pond to the wood room to make two-foot blocks for the grinders. By this time the chain conveyor to the grinder room had been replaced by a water sluice and a block tank. The knife barkers were gone, and there was another pair of barking drums in the wood room for re-bark-
ing and removing ice from wood brought in from the piles.

Wood was reclaimed from No. 1 Pile, the one parallel to the mill yard pond, with heavy steel rakes on endless cables which ran from movable donkey-engine-driven winches on the mill side of the yard pond, over the pile and through pulleys on back-masts on the other side. These dragged the wood directly into the pond. At the down-river end of No. 1 pile there was an uptake at right-angles to the pile leading to an overhead conveyor to the wood room, which, with cross conveyors, was used for bringing in the far end of the pile. Some of No. 2 pile could be taken in with rakes, but more cross conveyors, like those at East Millinocket, had to be used, and it was necessary to employ dynamite on both piles. They seemed prone to use heavier charges at Millinocket than at the Lower Mill, and the writer has seen a four foot stick from the back side of No. 1 pile land right in the middle of the line of men waiting to punch out at the Administration Building time office, but it was in the air long enough to be seen, and no one was hurt on this occasion.

At this time, there were special cars for pulpwood -- what used to be called rack cars -- slat-sided, open-topped, and with two doors on each side. Pulpwood was unloaded from cars by hand, stick by stick. It was relatively easy to get wood out of the racks, but there were not enough of them, and a lot of wood was still coming in box cars. These were miserable things to unload, as most of the wood had to be carried bodily to the door. A cable conveyor had been built along the railroad siding out near the Administration Building for receiving car wood. From this, there was an inclined chain conveyor to the uptake of No. 2 pile, and a tunnel transfer to the original car wood conveyor,
both unsatisfactory in operation, and subject to frequent plugging. The Steam Plant had been greatly enlarged, of course, and was now stoker fired and provided with mechanical coal and ash handling equipment, but coal was still shoveled off the cars on the trestles, as it had been when the mill started up thirty years before. We do not intend to clutter up this story with too many anecdotes, but this brings on one about an incident that happened not too long before this time. The fireroom and coal handling crews ran heavily to men of Italian ancestry, and there was still some feeling between those who had come from different parts of the old country. Coal still came on flat-cars with stakes and side boards, which were pried off and allowed to fall down on to the pile, to be picked up later. One day one of the men lost his footing and went down onto the pile with it. The other men on the car did not even look to see whether he was hurt or not, and continued to shovel the load down on top of him. When the Superintendent, who happened to be near by, ran over and demanded to know what the hell was going on, the nearest, without even breaking his swing, snorted "Aw he's a nothing but a goddam Calabrese!" and went on shovelling!

There were seven digesters now in the sulphite mill, and a third tower had been added to the Jenssen system. There had been some efforts at improving control of the cooking process, but this was still largely a matter of the cook's judgment. The chunks of limestone were still manhandled out of gondola cars into storage, and out of storage into the towers, and sulphur was still shovelled out of cars into wheelbarrows to be trundled into the sulphur storage room.
In the paper room, the heart of the mill, there had been much more change than at the Lower Mill, but the end effect was the same -- the machines did not have the efficiency of the equipment in the newer Canadian mills. Indeed, right at this time, with the new Nos. 7 and 8 machines not much more than broken in, it had been decided to begin a program of replacing the old No. 1 to 5 "two-roll" machines with four 234" "three-roll" units, and construction of the initial section of a new machine room designed to take these machines was under way. Most of the old beaters had been removed leaving only enough to prepare stock for the wrapper machine, which had been moved into the beater room from another location. At this time five Trimbey metering systems, located on elevated platforms along the machine room side of the beater room, one for each pair of machines, were in use.

Paper trucking and loading operations were exactly the same as those at the Lower Mill, except that, as it is recalled, finishing was being done on more than one shift, at least on Nos. 9 and 10 machines, where there was no finishing room space anyway. There was an added complication in trucking in that whereas at the Lower Mill there was a trucking platform on each side of the trainshed, there was none on the outside wall at Millinocket, and it was necessary to set cars with the doors opposite each other on the two tracks, place a metal dock board between them, and truck through the inside car to get to the one on the outside track. The machine shop was larger than that at the Lower Mill, and better located, but little better equipped as far as the age and condition of the machine tools was concerned. The roll grinders were now in the shop at this mill. The maintenance department and storeroom operations were set up just about the same as those at the Lower Mill, but it is the writer's recollection that...
there was a night man in the storeroom, which was located, along with the core room in the north end of the beater room building.

The Lower Mill had just acquired new offices, but at Millinocket the Superintendent's office at this time was just as and where it had been in 1900 -- at the north end of the finishing room, which was then 100 feet wide, along with one for the Finishing Room Foreman and the mill office crew, and a shower room for the boss machine tenders, all partitioned off from the finishing room and from each other by old-fashioned painted matched wainscoting. These were pretty crummy quarters even for those days, but the Superintendent of the time insisted on staying in the mill rather than move up to the Administration Building as the management wanted him to do. The first aid room was just where it is as this is written, along the platform west of the sulphite mill. The Paymaster's office, however, as previously noted, was in the Administration Building. As at the Lower Mill, there was a small office for each foreman, and at Millinocket, from memory, there were telephones in these offices, or most of them.

The fact was that the mills had become middle-aged. Millions of dollars had been spent on modernization, but the policy for quite a number of years had been to capitalize everything that the law would allow, and to restrict spending on capital improvements, just as far as possible, to an average amount equal to depreciation. This resulted in some wrenching decisions each year as to what should have priority, and almost every job done meant that some other project had to be delayed. It also resulted in holding almost every job to the bare essentials, leaving out the little things that would have made the installation more convenient, more efficient, or even perhaps more sightly.
Nevertheless, almost all the equipment operating at any particular time was in generally good repair, and, within its capability, was being run efficiently by a work force dedicated to the proposition of getting out of the mills the most paper, of the best quality that could be made at the lowest possible cost, doing their best with what they had to work with. One thing they did not have to work with was a reliable source of power, for the volume of production that had been reached. With no auxiliary system, they were at the mercy of the weather, and control of water supply resulted in almost constant juggling of the power used to produce a ton of groundwood. This affected both quality and cost. We will have more to say about this situation later, but it was a way of life, and as we have said, they did their best with it. Their best was very good, and they took pride in their performance for the Company, no matter what the odds were.

We have said that the working environment was not as good as it might have been; and by this we mean physical conditions and facilities more than atmosphere; and some was very poor indeed. However, there was gradual improvement over the years, as will be seen in other parts of our story, and even around the time of which we are writing it was better in the mills of the Company than in many other places, even than in some of the newer plants. Therefore, it is more for interest than with the intent of belaboring the situation critically that we look back at some of the things as they were at that point in time.

It was official policy that there be a housekeeping program at all mills — the President once refused to enter the Millinocket Mill
until a pile of sweepings, inadvertently left near the finishing room door during the special clean-up in preparation for his visit had been removed -- and that they be kept looking presentable, the results were relative to the conditions. Nearly all of the equipment in the mills was at this time still driven through shafting, pulleys and belts of one kind and another, and plain bearings were used wherever possible. Neither the mill people nor the Engineering Department were in favor of anti-friction bearings in damp locations, and most locations were damp. This made for a lot of lubricant spill, and a lot of hard-to-get-at places to clean. The machine room basements were nearly impossible to keep in shape for this reason and because of paper dust and bits of broke from the machine room above. The open spur gears, line shaft bearings and the always-present leaky steam joints on the back side of the machines made the same problem in the paper rooms. The grinder rooms were cold, wet, and often a "dungeon of fog", as they say down east; so thick with vapor from the grinders that one could hardly see across them. Heating was a problem everywhere. The wet end sections of the paper machines were hot and humid, and most of the wires always had to be protected from the rain of condensation from the roof by canvas strung up overhead. The train-sheds were entirely unheated, and the blast of air drawn from them through the finishing rooms by the paper room fans made these areas and the space around the winders in the paper room cold and drafty in the winter months. Lighting was, shall we say, unplanned, even in places like the paper room, where it should have been good. For example, while the writer was at East Millinocket, a color meter went haywire, and two machines made blue paper all one night, the change from white, coming gradually, being impossible to detect until daylight.
The color scheme did not help any. We have said in another place that everything around the mills but the walls, ceilings and sprinkler piping was painted gray. We lied. The flagpoles were white. An extensive painting program had been started about 1925, and William A. Whitcomb had made the decision that gray would be the universal color, like Henry Ford's black. This was strange, in a way, because he liked bright colors, but a single color was less expensive, and gray, for the purpose, seemed to him both utilitarian and efficient-looking. He was very finicky about the precise shade of gray. He did not care for what was used first, and it was three or four years before he settled on just what he wanted, studying foot-square color samples periodically arranged around the walls of his office. So we had Great Northern Gray, about the color of a battleship in wartime. This was used freely, and everything was well painted, but not very inspiring, at the time of which we write. The painting program gradually deteriorated, and some things never got to be painted or repainted, but when they were they were gray, the standard color for the next twenty years.

Everything that had to be moved in the mills was moved by muscle-power. There were chainfalls all over the place -- on crane beams in the grinder rooms, moved by hand, on trolley beams in the paper rooms and the shops and at fixed locations in other places -- but to the writer's memory, no piece of powered lifting equipment inside the mills, except a freight elevator between the repair shop and the finishing room at the Lower Mill and another in the beater room at Millinocket. Everything that moved horizontally went on wheeled vehicles or rollers, pushed or pulled by manpower. There were no
power trucks of any kind in the mills until 1931, and no fork lifts, front end loaders or anything of that nature until later than that.

There were a lot of other little things lacking at this time, and while some of these were provided later during the life of the old Company, we will tell it like it was right at the period of which we write. There was, for instance, no quality control organization. Quality control was in the hands of the foreman. There were small so-called laboratories in the pulp mills, but nothing much there to work with. The groundwood mills, for instance, had little more than a blue glass and a home-made freeness tester. The Bureau did test work and some checking on quality, but there were no regular pulp or paper testers except the sampler from the office, who ran a pop test and checked the basis weight on samples from each shift for the Superintendent. Brightness, color, finish and formation were judged by eye or by feel, and the first modern basis weight scale, replacing the old brass quadrant type, had been bought about 1926. There was very little instrumentation -- electrical instruments of course, but otherwise vacuum gauges on the suction rolls, recording back-pressure gauges on the steam headers to the machines, pressure gauges in the steam plant and some other places, and some liquid level recorders -- were about all. There were no electrical load centers and almost no remote control switchgear. There was very, very little push-button equipment in any mill.

There were no parking lots. Some of the foremen and a few men drove cars to the mills and parked them here and there, but almost everyone walked to work in those days. There were no gate guards, only a night watchman at each mill, and when there was wood in the...
piles a "Log Pile Watch", the title a hang-over from the days of the long log piles. Men on tour work carried their meals into the mill for the most part. Baskets were favored for this purpose at Fast Millinocket, and were mostly hung up on wires, suspended clear of the walls, to keep them away from the cockroaches which flourished despite periodic extermination jobs. At Millinocket, people used more metal lunch boxes. For many years, it had been custom for children to carry lunches into the mill at noon time for the day shift, and in the late afternoon for the 4 to 12 crew. These kids, all ages from nine or ten years up, had free run of the mills, and particularly in the afternoon, played around the spiral stairways, the conveyors and the pulp piles; climbed over and under the cars on the sidings, and otherwise subjected themselves to all kinds of hazards. After a couple of serious accidents had occurred, this was stopped, around 1926, by making it a requirement that lunches be left at the time offices, a man or two being relieved of his job in each section of the mill to deliver them to their owners at the appropriate time. There was considerable griping about this, particularly by those who insisted on having hot meals, and there were other problems, like the time office at Millinocket being a quarter of a mile from the mill, but the Company made it stick.

At this time there was really no true accident prevention program. This is not to say that there was no effort at all to prevent accidents, but what effort there was did not have much weight behind it, and was largely directed toward guarding unsafe spots, not too successfully. It was not recognized that a man did not know how to do his job right until he knew how to do it safely, and with thought for the safety of others. There was little personal protective equipment. Welding hel-
mets, goggles, gloves and gas masks for certain conditions, of course, and a few men wore steel-toed shoes of their own accord, but there were no hard hats or other such body protection, and no meaningful education in how to work without getting hurt. There were rules about ladders and other promiscuous sources of accident, but there was a lot of resistance to them, and enforcement was spotty. There were no places set aside in the mills for the men to eat their meals, except that there was a table at the wet end between each pair of machines for the machine tenders. There were home-made bubble-fountains here and there in the mills, but a man often had to go quite a long way from his job to get a drink of water, which was never cold, as there were no coolers. Toilets were equipped, almost without exception, only with what were known as "jo-holes" -- elliptical openings in non-slip cast iron floor plates set behind partitions without doors, over running sewers.

It may seem strange in a way that for a company that had always had a high regard for the dignity of the working man there were so few amenities in the plants. On the other hand, it was consistent with the policy of no frills. It was not so much that the management did not recognize that some of these conditions should not be better, but priority for these kinds of improvements was low on the totem pole. Remember we are talking about the year 1928, or thereabouts, and all these things were not necessarily substandard for those times. As late as 1946, the writer was in a New England paper mill where the toilets, for both men and women, were round poles -- that's right, poles, not holes -- across little open-bottomed cubicles about four feet wide, hung on the outside of the mill twenty feet above the river. They had doors, though!
As time went on, a lot of time in some cases, much was done to improve conditions. Take washrooms, for example. By 1928, locker and washrooms, with showers, had been provided for most areas of the mills, but with only a few exceptions that the writer can recall, they were sorry affairs, inadequate in location, size, lighting, ventilation and facilities. Group showers were home-made jobs, with no separate hot water supply, cold water for these and the wash-sinks being heated right in the piping by the admission of exhaust steam, regulated by hand valves. Why no one was ever scalded to death by one of these things is some kind of miracle. Built of hy-rib and plaster -- tile was unheard of -- painted the ubiquitous gray, with concrete floors, washrooms and locker rooms came close to being a disgrace, and were a source of common and continuous complaint.

There were some excuses for this situation. The primary one was lack of floor space, not so much for washrooms as for lockers. The second was that even when an effort was made to provide new or improved facilities, they were very often quickly turned into rat's nests by the very people who complained about them. For example, the "shavings" or ribbon of trim from the edges of the rolls of paper on the winder was around this time blown out sideways into a pile on the floor between the machines, and was periodically thrown down the broke-hole. At Fast Millinocket, at least, it was customary to allow a large amount to accumulate at the end of the shift, and many of the papermakers, after showering would run naked out of the washroom, which was at the dry end, and roll in this stuff to dry off, like children playing in a heap of leaves. This incidentally, made it necessary to steer visitors, especially females, away from the paper room at the change of shift. When a new larger washroom was built in the
screen room at East Millinocket, beyond the wet end of the machines, many men carried an armful of shavings or dry broke down there to use as a towel, with the result that after the crew had left, the floor was ankle-deep in pulp. This kind of thing did not happen in every washroom. A few were kept very well policed, and some, from their very nature, were practically impossible to keep clean, but in general, very little effort was made to do so anyway, and regardless of whether this was a case of the chicken or the egg coming first, the local management was not enthusiastic about spending money on them. This attitude is exemplified by two letters found in the files of the Spruce Wood Department. These were written in 1912, and had nothing to do with the mill, but they can just as well be applied to 1928, and to some mill conditions.

June 13, 1912

"F.A. Gilbert
Bangor, Maine

Dear Sir:

At Pittston, the closets ... are an unclean sight the way the men use them. Would you think it best to finish a toilet room down cellar with no entrance to any other part of the cellar and put the closets down there with a stairway --- and put in a urinal as well as stools..?

Respectfully yours,

F.L. Amey"
June 20, 1912

"Mr. Everett Amey
160 State Street
Bangor, Maine
Dear Sir:
Acknowledging yours of June 13th regarding the Pittston closets.

As we have no doubt that they would be as unclean in the basement as they are in the main office, the reason we put them in the office was that they might enjoy their nastiness close at hand. We do not care to deprive them of any inexpensive pleasures.

Yours truly,
Great Northern Paper Co.
F.A. Gilbert"

This is just to point out again that everything about the old Company was not beautiful, and the writer heard much the same argument from the mill management at and after the time of which we are writing. Nevertheless, later on, when he got so he began to have some weight, he concluded that the egg ought to come first, and made washroom improvement one of his objectives. One of his early moves, a calculated risk, was to steer William A. Whitcomb into the washroom in the Millinocket sulphite screen room, the most obnoxious one he could find, and it was indescribably bad. This, and the argument that a man should not have to go home to his wife's clean house from one of these messes, along with some other persuasion, got action, and steps
began to be taken. Space was made by double-decking; by putting rooms up on steel columns so as to leave clear floor space beneath, and other expedients. A washroom was provided at Millinocket, for instance, by bridging over the alley between the generator room and the boiler house, the feeling being that the passage had to be left unobstructed at grade to let water through to Millinocket Stream in case a penstock should burst. Progress was slow, and the old Company never really solved the problem of washrooms entirely, but like Captain Marryatt's Mr. Muddle, it "mitigated" it.

The workers at this time had no fringe benefits like pensions, insurance or vacations. They had three paid holidays, and no paid time off for any other reason. The foremen did not say "please". A man could not smoke legally anywhere in the mills, although he could usually sneak a drag, if he wanted to, in a washroom or toilet. By unwritten law these places were sort of off-limits for foremen.

The men in the mills at this time represented as fine a work force as the Company had ever had, or is ever likely to have. The second generation was already in the plants. It had grown up with respect for authority without subservience. At Millinocket and Fast Millinocket, the people had always lived in isolated Great Northern communities; had always been given a fair deal in the things that mattered most to them, and were convinced that Great Northern was a good outfit to work for. Those at Madison were a little more worldly. They had been exposed to what went on in the textile mills and shoe factories, and in the several other paper mills in their part of the country, and they were even more sure that Great Northern was better than anything they saw elsewhere. There was not always perfect agree-
ment between them and the management, but there was never, through the time of the old Company, a more cooperative group of workers, men and women, than those at Madison, which statement does not take anything away from the people at the other mills.

At all the plants there were of course the usual malcontents and misfits, but they produced little real friction. As individuals, a very large majority of the workers respected, in some cases even admired, the management and supervision; although some were of course more highly regarded than others; and they put out for them and for the Company. Many of these people were in the work force during all the writer's time. He had many friends among them and among the equally good men who came later, and is proud to have been associated with them.

There is a difference between the relationship between the Company and the employee as an individual, and the employee as a union member, because of employer attitude toward his organization, the quality of his union leadership, and the number and nature of the real or imagined wrongs to his fellow-workers whose cause he is expected to espouse. This relationship, good when manifested in discipline, cooperation and pride in accomplishment; poor when there is disaffection, open or covert obstruction and grudging performance, was good in the old Company.

Except for the first few years, when there was a certain amount of turbulence due in great part to inter-union animosity, the writer has no reason to believe that attitudes in general had been in the past any different from those which he remembers when he went to work
at East Millinocket in 1924. At that time, it seemed to him, there was a sort of reserve between the workers and management which is hard to describe and harder to explain. If you were paid by the hour, you were a union man. If you were salaried, you were a Company man. The boss was the boss. Men pretty much did what they were told, and griped about it afterwards, if they had a gripe. You could discuss a union complaint or other union matters in the mill, but it was best to have a witness, and it was not well for a local union officer to be seen talking with a Company man outside of the plant, although there seemed to be some Company people to whom this proscription did not apply. Some were even allowed to work with the pipers or painters on Sundays when the load was heavy. There was social stratification in both camps, but much less than there had been in the very early days. Even with this vague atmosphere of suspicion; of what nobody was quite sure; there was much good will. Within a few years, this distrust was largely dissipated, and was replaced by a feeling of mutual confidence and trust, which, while there were ups and downs, grew stronger over the next twenty-odd years, which were marked by the great depression, the turmoil arising from the birth of the C.I.O., the N.R.A. period, the passage of labor legislation, the secondary depression of 1938, the wage and salary controls of World War II, the arrival of third-generation people in the work force, the period of post-war adjustment and the beginning of radical changes in the Company. In 1952, in the writer's opinion, this feeling was very high, and contributed in no small measure to the building of the Greater Great Northern. This may be the time to depart from discussion of the period we have been considering, and attempt to show what brought this about.
The late John P. Burke, President of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers, in a speech delivered at the 50-year celebration in Millinocket in 1951, said:

"I am sometimes asked what is the secret of our success in dealing with the Great Northern Paper Company. I always answer by saying that there is no secret; that it is because both sides want to be fair; that both sides use common sense, and that both sides are really interested in reaching a mutually satisfactory settlement. If there is any one reason for the maintenance of industrial peace in these mills during all these years, it has been the attitude of the Company toward the unions, and the attitude of the unions toward the Company."

At the time this speech was delivered, the writer had been with the Company, in or associated with higher management, for more than a quarter of a century. In all this time, negotiations had always been concluded amicably, and while there were complaints from the workers about almost everything from which a complaint could be fabricated, there were very few true grievances, which by the writer's definition, are complaints arising out of violation of contract provisions, the breaking of good-faith verbal and written agreements made outside of the contract, or the unilateral abolishment of long-standing customs or prerogatives. Not long after this, the atmosphere changed, for many reasons, and grievances multiplied, but even then, while there had been provision for arbitration of contract disputes from away back, it was actually sixty years after Great Northern made its first paper before a grievance had to be settled by an outsider. But that was not in the days of the old Company.
All the circumstances that contributed to this relationship as it developed over the years could never be catalogued. A great many involved little things on both sides, but we will make an attempt to at least rationalize some of the major factors.

As we will see, Garret Schenck had a lot to do with labor after he had established the Company, working with and through George Parks. He believed in the dignity of the individual. In his time, and long afterward, no one in the organization was allowed to refer to any man as a "common laborer", and it is a fact that while there was a classification "Laborer" on the printed "Labor Classification" chart used at an early date, there was no such occupation as "laborer" on the Company's payrolls, at least in the mills. There were yard men and waste handlers and cleaners, but no "laborers". However, he dealt with people and situations through men in whom he had confidence. He had lived through the earlier years of the labor movement; the time of Terence V. Powderly and his unruly Noble Order of the Knights of Labor, of Big Bill Haywood and his Communist "Wobblies" -- the Industrial Workers of the World -- of Eugene Debs and his Socialist Party, closely allied with labor, and he had watched the rise of the powerful American Federation of Labor under Samuel Gompers. It was entirely in keeping with his character that he be distrustful of anything that might threaten his "supremacy" in his Company, and while he had no quarrel with organized labor as such, to him "labor" was spelled with a capital L, and he did not have much faith in some of its leadership. However, he was a man with strong opinions of his own of what was right and what was wrong, and his dealings with the Company's employees were tempered by his convictions. At the same time, the ideology of the conflict of interest between labor and management, although some-
what weakened, was still alive in the minds of many of the workers. This combination of circumstances did not result in any particular ill-feeling among the employees. As a matter of fact, during Garret Schenck's time a private detective, an operative of one Dan Green, a former "Pinkerton" who had gone into business for himself, was planted in one of the mills every so often to see what was going on. There was one at one of the mills in 1928. While a different man was sent each time, he was usually spotted in a few weeks, and his presence aroused more amusement than resentment. It was just part of the way things were.

William A. Whitcomb had taken over the management of labor matters in 1910, and while he of necessity had some of Garret Schenck's old time religion, it was a reformed version. William A. Whitcomb had no reservations about the viability of the collective bargaining process, and no doubts about his ability to cope with any union leadership. To him labor was not spelled with a capital L; it was the Company's work force.

He had to allow the spy system we have mentioned to continue, but had no great enthusiasm for it. We do not know very much about his relationship with the heads of the two large unions in his early days -- one of them was very hard to deal with, as we will see later, but he had great respect for John P. Burke, President of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers after 1916, and for Matthew Burns, President of the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers, who came along a little later. Their regard for him was reciprocal, and this mutual respect was translated to the representatives of most of the Company's other unions. The essence of
his philosophy, as it was expressed to the writer by William O. McKay, was: "Pay your men good wages; be fair and honest with them, but don't pamper them". His first precept is on indication of why Great Northern set the wage pattern for the newsprint industry for many years.

His policies, which established the base for those of his successor, paid off in the steadily improved relations which we have noted, in spite of some of the conditions we have mentioned, which came partly from the "don't pamper them" part of his thesis, and pleased the Directors, whose memorial resolve at the time of his death contains the following somewhat unusual compliment to the head of a corporation:

"He was a firm believer in union labor, and during his administration labor relations at all plants were harmonious."

The atmosphere had already begun to change to one of less restraint when William O. McKay took over as Manager of Manufacture and chief negotiator for the Company in 1923. He had been closely associated with William A. Whitcomb for years, and in 1926, following Garret Schenck Jr.'s death and before the title changes we mentioned earlier, had been made Assistant to the General Manager. He had been brought up in William A. Whitcomb's school, but was an entirely different personality, and had his own ideas, which had an effect on the situation. Dan Green's operation was discontinued almost immediately, for one thing. William O. McKay was much more outgoing than William A. Whitcomb, and added to the latter's basic policies a very sincere concern for the problems of the individual employee. As he told the writer, he had come under censure from officials of
other paper companies for being "soft on labor". Both men visited the mills often, making themselves visible to the work force, and showing interest in what they were doing for the Company. However, people were a little awed by William A. Whitcomb's outward austerity, while William O. McKay was naturally friendly and highly approachable, bringing himself closer to the workers, and things continued to be more and more relaxed under his administration of the Manufacturing Department, and during his term as President.

There were of course other factors contributing to the change we mention. These things had to do both with the negotiation of the contract with the unions -- incidentally, it was an "Agreement" in the old Company, and was almost never referred to as a "Contract", a subtle distinction which was part of the feeling we are trying to develop -- and with day-to-day relations. The first was that by accident of time the International officers and representatives of the Company's union organizations had become a very stable group. There were new men, of course, as time went on, but almost all of these had been conditioned to Great Northern attitudes and procedures by exposure to Great Northern negotiations, in association with their predecessors, before assuming responsibility. The second was that local representation was also stable. There had developed at the mills a cadre of men who had proved themselves, not only in negotiations but in the daily give and take with local management. New officers and delegates were always being elected, naturally, but most of them listened to those with experience, and did not come equipped with chips on their shoulders. The third was that men were moved from Maine to the Boston office, and placed in positions which involved
them in contract negotiations and thus automatically in employee relations. There were only three such, and of these only two were in Boston at any one time, but they were important in the area we are discussing.

The earliest, in point of time, was the writer, transferred from East Millinocket as a stenographer in 1927. Not counting Garret Schenck Jr. and his secretary, he was, to best of his knowledge, the first man, and the only ordinary Joe from the mills to be moved into the head office. We should say here that one other secretarial type was brought to Boston from Maine, but that was more than twenty years later, and he came from the Bangor office. The others to whom we refer at this time had worked up to the brass level before being moved. One was Albin R. (Dick) Caspar, whom came in 1928, and the other Creighton B. Stanwood, in 1936, both from Millinocket and both installed in the position of Assistant Manager of Manufacture.

In 1927 and 1928, a five-year agreement was in effect, and there were no full negotiations, but Dick Caspar had worked in the mills, where he was well-known and well-liked, and had first hand knowledge of the attitudes and problems of the employees. When contract talks reopened in 1931, the writer was concerned only in a minor way, but Dick Caspar was active. Before 1935, when he went to New York, and was shortly replaced by Creighton Stanwood, another man who although perhaps not so well-known to the mill workers was well thought of by them, the writer had been fully exposed, and in addition, had become known as the liaison between Boston and the Maine operations. Then there was Francis R. (Frank) Keenan, of whom there will be more later, who as W.O. McKay's secretary had been sitting in on negotiations.
for a long time. The result was that as far as contract negotiations go, the majority of the men talking to each other were almost always people who had mutual understanding and trust, and could conduct business on that basis, within the limitations imposed by their separate responsibilities, and when they arrived at a conclusion they put their names on the agreement right at the bargaining table in Boston -- negotiations from at least as far back as when William A. Whitcomb became General Manager were conducted in Boston -- with confidence that their membership on the one side, and their superiors on the other, would accept their conclusion.

We have said that the writer had become known as the contact man between the head office and the mills. This fact was an element in progress toward the kind of relationship reached by the old Company and its mill employees. Being very young when he was at the mill, he had made friends among the younger workers, but had often gone to the older men, more than to supervision, to learn about the business, and had made many of them his friends too. Within a few years after he went to Boston both William O. McKay and William A. Whitcomb had begun to use him as a go-between, investigator and translator, in almost every area of the Company's operations except the Sales Department. He was for this reason at the mills very often, and regardless of his prime mission, always tried to find time to walk through them and keep in touch with his old acquaintances. It was not long before he knew almost everyone; almost everyone knew him, and he was a good listener. It was known that he was in position to make effective suggestions or recommendations about situations or conditions -- the word was: "John McLeod's been here; something must be going to happen!" -- and in a natural development, he became a sort of unofficial
one-man industrial relations department, people came to him with their problems, and he did his best to justify their confidence. As a ranking union official said later, he was able to take labor's side with management, and management's side with labor, and keep the respect of both -- a comment which he considers a high compliment. Even after he got into the brass area himself, he could maintain this relationship; is proud of the fact that it was universally accepted that if John McLeod said it, it was so; and there is too much evidence to allow him any false modesty about the importance of his contribution to industrial harmony in the Company.

However, good relations are not engendered entirely by the policies of high level management, no matter how well they may be transmitted. They must be carried out by those in direct charge of the operations, who represent the Company day by day, and who as men of understanding and good will, establish the tone and set the example for their supervisors. The old Company had such men -- men like Bill Hilton, Max Hilton, Al MacNeill, Orrin Harkness, Newcomb Sutherland and Charlie Glaster in the woods; Henry Hall, Neal Merrill, Charlie Burr, Joe Nevins, Bob Hume, Charlie Carrier and Ivan Ames at the mills, and dozens more, but where does one stop? They were men of different personalities, from different backgrounds, but each in his own peculiar way trying his best to do what was expected of him in dealing with his people. The writer knew all of them. They not only worked for Great Northern, they lived Great Northern. They had ambition, but it was the ambition to do a good job for the Company, and only one of those we have named refused to accept without question the management's ultimate place for him in the scheme of things.
All these things were important, and there were others which we will try to cover in the proper places, but it is a fact that the atmosphere became, over the twenty years or so after 1928, one of an even higher degree of confidence and trust between the workers and the management than it had been before. This is what John P. Burke was talking about, and it was for real. He called the situation "unique", and it was. Not that there were not some pretty hairy confrontations, nor that management and labor did not remain separated by duty and tradition, but by the time the end of the period of the old Company approached, there had developed a strong mutual identification with the welfare of Great Northern, and a mutual pride in being part of it. Men in both categories said so openly, and backed up their words by their deeds.

All of this is not by any means the whole story of the old Company. It is merely an effort to tell something about its nature as seen from the inside, and to establish a background for some of the events that we will take up later. In so doing, we have departed somewhat from our expressed intention to stay within the confines of the period of a few years around the end of Garret Schenck's era, but this is typical of a down-easter, who never says simply that he went from here to there, but to prove that he did, describes all the features of the scenery along the way.

We can think of no better way to close this chapter than to quote, in part, some of the mostly unrelated things that outside sources had to say about the old Company during this period. The reader will find them interesting, and pertinent to what we have said.
We will start back in 1929, with an unidentified clipping, almost surely from the old Boston News Bureau, a financial publication which we have quoted many times before:

"THE PENALTIES OF SECRECY

No. 6715

Bangor, Maine. October 11, 1929

Please give me your opinion of Great Northern Paper bought at 68. Do you consider it a good stock?

M.

Answer - Great Northern Paper Co. has long been considered one of the leading factors in the newsprint industry. It is one of the lowest, if not the very lowest cost producer, but unfortunately the management does not see fit to take stockholders into its confidence. The company does not report earnings even annually, nor does it provide stockholders with a balance sheet at the close of its fiscal year.

Irrespective of the high reputation which the management of any corporation has achieved.....until a greater degree of confidence is manifested toward the company's stockholders, it would not seem the part of wisdom to hold this stock as against others of equal merit concerning whose operations information is currently available."

A little more than a year later, the Great Northern Paper Company "manifested confidence in its stockholders" by issuing its first Annual Report, for the year 1930. This was nothing but a balance sheet, but it drew a four-column headline in the Bangor Daily News of March 5, 1931:
"EARNINGS ESTIMATED AT OVER THREE MILLION DOLLARS FOR LAST YEAR INDICATED IN FIRST STATEMENT PUBLISHED BY THE COMPANY.

Indicating, on a basis of a tax reserve set up as a current liability, earnings in excess of $3,000,000 during the past year, an annual statement and balance sheet -- the first ever published by the Great Northern Paper Company -- was received by stockholders of this great institution yesterday, that is little short of a phenomenon.

At a time when most businesses were struggling to keep out of the red and the entire country was passing through a period of depression, the most serious in many years, the Great Northern Paper Company, a Maine institution, carried on as usual and ended the year with the results just mentioned.

One of Bangor's and Maine's greatest assets, the largest newsprint mill in the United States, located in the heart of our great Northeastern Empire, submitted a balance sheet to its stockholders yesterday that tells a story unequalled even in fiction. This industry, the Great Northern Paper Company, still in its infancy, means more to the people of Bangor and Eastern and Northern Maine than the average human intellect can comprehend."

The next was a letter, with editorial comment, published in the Bangor Daily News later in the same year:
"A CORPORATION WITH A SOUL

Fast Millinocket, Maine
June 29, 1931

For thirty years I have been doing business with the Great Northern Paper Company, and I feel it is time to express a few words of thanks in appreciation of the kind cooperation and honesty that I have found in all my dealings with that great organization.

Of those thirty years that I have been connected with the company, the last twenty have been as a contractor. In none of my transactions during that time have I found them anything but square and honorable in every respect.

I want to thank those officials whom I have had the pleasure of knowing personally..... Under such able and honest management the company is bound to prosper. 'By their works ye shall know them'.

Sincerely,
Henry F. Powers"

The Editor's comment is also quoted in part:

"Back in the days of Bryan and McKinley the politicians, economists and social philosophers debated at length the question of whether or not corporations had souls. Even in that remote period of history, when the cartoonists and stump speakers delighted in depicting all great business organizations as oppressors of the people, money monsters with cloven hoofs and horns, it was definitely established
that many of the corporations had both hearts and souls as well as brains.... That is the impression that the Great Northern Paper Company has made upon the people of the Penobscot valley and of all Maine.... In this spirit of enterprise, fair dealing and community helpfulness, the Great Northern has thrived and the community has prospered with it...."

Now we go to 1936, when the industry was beginning to pull out of the depression and prices were beginning to rise, and quote from the PAPER MILL of August 8, 1936.

"That the Great Northern Paper Company is determined to maintain a position of price leadership in the United States market for News Print Paper is indicated by its announcement early this week of an increase of only $1.50 a ton for 1937 over the current contract price. Higher prices had been anticipated among the Canadian Mills and it is probable that the daily Newspaper Publishers were expecting a greater advance....

Regardless of the viewpoint, it must be conceded that the Management of the Great Northern Paper Company has the courage of its convictions. There are some who profess to believe that the price policy inaugurated by the Great Northern Paper Company last year, when they increased the price for 1936 only one dollar a ton over 1935, is a measure of retaliation against the price cutting in this market perpetrated by Canadian Mills during the past fourteen or fifteen years.
THE PAPER MILL prefers to believe that the Great Northern Paper Company's policy is motivated by a desire to prevent a recurrence of the heedless expansion of production facilities inspired by abnormally rapid rises in prices of News Print Paper during the years of the World War. With a consequent over expansion which failed dismally to compensate for what followed -- fifteen years of steadily declining prices to one bankruptcy after another.

Contrary to first impressions, therefore, the Great Northern Paper Company may be rendering valuable service not only to Newspaper Publishers but to the Paper and Pulp Industry as a whole by applying the brake. The PAPER MILL. . . . prefers to believe that the Management of this greatest of all News Print producing organizations in the United States is endeavoring to rationalize an Industry that has long been sadly in need of such curative treatment."

TIME magazine, in an article in its January 10, 1938 issue, under the heading "Publishers' Pains", said, again in part;

"Many publishers in recent years have contracted for their newsprint on the condition that it was not to be above that asked by Great Northern. . . . To them, Great Northern's president, handsome William Arthur Whitcomb, has not been tough in making prices. Result is that he is popular with publishers but poison to his colleagues in the newsprint industry.
What Great Northern's competitors regard as its inexcusable policy of undercutting has worked out well for Great Northern..... In 1936 its profits were $1,200,000; an amount not remarkable for a company of its size, but very comforting to Mr. Whitcomb when he reflects that not so long ago 40% of all North American newsprint capacity was bankrupt....."

Finally, from a letter written by John P. Burke to the Editor of the Boston Globe, and published on June 21, 1946, a few days after the death of William A. Whitcomb:

"..... I doubt if Mr. Whitcomb ever made any claims of being a "friend of labor" in the sense that this term is used by candidates for public office, or by those seeking some personal advantage at the expense of labor.

I dare say, however, that a few men did more in a practical way than did William A. Whitcomb to help working men obtain a better standard of life....

William A. Whitcomb was a man of integrity who believed in the integrity of other men. His influence and his deeds, though never publicized, eased life's burdens for thousands of his fellow men."

Many of the things that we have said and will say about the old Company may sound familiar to those who know it as it is now, and indeed there cannot help but be a certain continuity. But it is not like it was. To paraphrase Alphonse Karr in reverse,
"The more things seem the same, the more they have changed".

Having written this chapter, we wonder whether it is not an exercise in futility. The old Company did not disappear in a puff of smoke in 1952. Many of the things we have said about it were just as true six or eight years later, and there are many who think of the 1950's as the good old days, and they are right, as we will see later. However, for we older people, 1952 marked the end of an era which we do not expect we have been able to adequately explain. We have little ability to express abstract thoughts. Nevertheless, we had to try. And this brings us to one change of elemental importance, the demise of the old Boston Office, the Olympus of the old Company. We will do our best to explain it, because this too is something we have to do.