PERSONAL

profile...

C. M. Brown came to General Chemical to learn the chemical business. He planned to stay 5 years. Twenty-six years later he was appointed the division's president

C. M. Brown

President, General Chemical Division, Allied Chemical & Dye Corp. Born Cape Girardeaux, Mo.; B.S. chemistry, Univ. of Mo., 1929; chemist, General Chemical plant, East St. Louis, Ill., 1929–35; asst. superintendent, 1935–36; asst. superintendent, Calumet, Ill., plant, 1936; plant manager, East St. Louis, 1937; production dept., New York office, 1938–42; plant manager, Pt. Pleasant, W. Va., 1943–45; New York office, 1945–48; director of sales, 1948–50; vice president, 1950–52; executive vice president, 1952–55; director, National Agricultural Chemicals Association, 1955 to date.

CHESTER M. BROWN started his association with agricultural chemicals on his first day at the General Chemical Division of Allied Chemical & Dye. This goes back to 1929, when Brown, fresh out of the University of Missouri with a degree in chemistry, landed a job in the company's East St. Louis, Ill., plant. Beginning in today's equivalent of the control lab, he quickly set his sights on production work—not ag chemicals alone, but all types of chemicals. Since then he has learned production, all angles of it, and all products of company. The board of directors must have recognized this when they made him president of the division last October.

Although General has been a substantial producer of ag chemicals (inorganic and organic), the company has also been a leading producer of sulfuric and other heavy acids. Add to this a substantial inorganic salt business and fluorinated hydrocarbons (Genetrons) and, further, a line of reagent and fine chemicals, marketed under the Baker & Adamson label.

Started in Control Lab

Working in the control lab Brown learned a good deal about the products made at East St. Louis—aluminum sulfate, sulfuric acid, and a lime-sulfur insecticide. This prompted him to aim for the production side of the picture. In 1930 he became foreman of the contact sulfuric acid unit.

When he started with the company, Brown set up what he calls his "five-year plan." Under it he hoped to learn all he could about the chemical industry and then, if better opportunities did not come his way, he felt a job change would be in order.

Changes did come, however—not his, but General's. In 1935, was made general foreman (now called assistant superintendent) of the St. Louis facility. Next Brown moved to the company's Calumet Works, near Chicago as the general foreman. Here he picked up more experience with chemicals—hydrochloric, silicate of soda, and more on sulfuric.

In April 1937 Brown returned to St. Louis as plant superintendent, but he was soon summoned to the New York office for an assignment in the production department—the company group that supervises all of General's manufacturing plants. In 1938 he was appointed assistant production manager.

Time Out for War

When the U. S. entered World War II, the country was short of munitions facilities. Existing units could not cope with the demand. General was one of the organizations called upon to set up a defense corporation. The company built a plant at Pt. Pleasant, W. Va., and Brown drew an assignment there.

He became plant manager there in 1943, and under his direction the facility set a record for production of TNT. More TNT was produced per line than any other unit operating facility in the country.

Returns to Headquarters as Director of Fine Chemicals, Reagents

After the war Brown returned to the New York office and shortly became director of reagents and fine chemicals, a post embracing production and sales. Then company policy decided to take Baker & Adamson, which makes DDT and BHC, out of batch manufacturing into large volume, often continuous, production. Brown played a notable hand in this transition.

With his extensive background in over-all company operations, Brown was appointed director of sales for the General Chemical Division, giving him over-all responsibility for agricultural, heavy, and laboratory chemicals—a step well up the ladder that Brown did not expect to climb. The company then made 1000 products, 150 of them agricultural ones. In 1950 he became a vice president and, two years later, executive vice president. When M. M. Biddison retired in 1955, Brown was named to succeed him.

NAC Director

Recently, Brown was appointed a director of the National Agricultural Chemicals Association. This pleases him since he has become well acquainted with this field from his long associations with General's fungicide, insecticide, and weed killer interests.

As for General Chemical's future, Brown recognizes the agricultural and chemical industries are fast moving businesses. The division simply has to move much faster, says Brown. This means research and expansion in areas that require it. He is firmly convinced he has a fine company and Brown adds, "I want to keep it that way."