

Chance of Centralia

By DON BENSON

F. Gano Chance, '29, president and chairman of the board of the A. B. Chance Co. of Centralia, Mo., is convinced that a well-rounded liberal education is just as important to the engineer as the necessary technical training. No matter what line of engineering a man may follow, he still must work with people, and this means not only the customer, but fellow workers and other members of society.

This feeling first came to Chance as an engineering student at the University. He recalled that when he would meet the old grads returning on St. Pat's day and other occasions, he found many of them extremely qualified in their field, but lacking in general knowledge.

"Fortunately," Chance said, "the University today has a well-rounded program for the engineering student, but with the present emphasis on science and engineering we should take special precautions not to slip back to the old way."

F. Gano Chance has used his engineering training at the University along with education in the humanities to build what is one of the largest industries in the state and one of the leaders in its field in the United States.

In order to provide himself with a good foundation, Chance not only studied toward graduation in 1929 with a B.S. in chemical engineering, minor in mathematics, but also went into history, political science

and economics to the point that he received an A.B. the same year.

To add further to this liberal education, Chance took one year out and went with a group of students and professors on a world cruise. Regular classes were held on board ship, "but they were the humanities and not engineering," he said. In all of his traveling, Chance has visited more than 40 foreign countries and most of the United States.

Today he continues to be a student of the humanities. He reads avidly in political science, history and economics and is in constant demand as a speaker because of his great belief in free enterprise and his outspoken stand against socialism and communism.

After graduation he returned to his native Centralia to take an active part in his father's company. A. B. Chance had started the company in 1907 to make equipment for telephone companies. He had been a telephone worker and installed many of the early switchboards and lines in mid-Missouri, including the first telephone line between Centralia and Columbia in 1900.

In 1912, he devised the "Never-Creep" metal plate anchor for anchoring utility poles, an invention which is generally regarded as the foundation of the company's success. It led to Chance Company's growth into the world's largest producer of earth anchors.

In 1931 F. Gano Chance was named vice-president

F. Gano Chance, '29, president (second from left) with three other M. U. alumni on A. B. Chance Company staff: W. L. Hollander, '29, and James K. Harper, '38, senior design engineers; and Perry Roberts, '48, methods engineer in industrial engineering department. Workman at left adjusts one part of huge three-power switch.



of the firm and in 1939 he became president. His father had built the business from a struggling firm in an old church building to an industry doing \$1,247,000 in gross sales in 1939 and using several buildings.

Gano then took over from his father, although the founder remained as chairman of the board until his death in 1949, and guided the company until today its gross annual sales are more than \$20,000,000. The plant in Centralia has been enlarged and other A. B. Chance factories and offices have been added in San Francisco and Pittsburgh with sales offices in New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas, Pittsburgh and San Francisco.

In addition, there is the A.B. Chance Company of Canada, Ltd., in Toronto, a subsidiary. Other subsidiaries are Porcelain Products, Inc., with factories in Parkersburg, West Va., and Carey, Ohio; and the American Crossarm and Conduit Company with factories in North Kansas City, Schiller Park, Ill., Minneapolis, Danville, Pa., and Gainesville, Fla. There are about 1,200 employees.

Despite the large city factories, Chance has remained in Centralia and keeps the main office there. He is rather shocked when asked why. It's just as if he had never thought seriously of leaving the home town—and he probably hasn't.

The company still makes the Never-Creep Anchor, very similar to the one designed by A. B. Chance 45 years ago. But added to this are other anchors, each for a particular purpose; pole line hardware; construction tools for telephone and power lines; hot line tools; clamps and connectors; grounding equipment; protective devices; and switches, ranging from those of low voltage up to 230,000 volts.

But, in keeping with Chance's personal standards, the company contributes to the Chance Foundation, a charitable trust established under the will of the late A. B. Chance. Recently when construction costs of a new high school in Centralia were running higher than anticipated and some desirable features were going to be eliminated, the foundation gave \$20,000 to the cause. Another \$20,000 had been given earlier to the grade school.

The foundation also spearheaded a drive and gave \$6,000 toward the installation of a network analyzer at the University electrical engineering laboratories. This piece of equipment is now in use.

In March of 1953 Chance was presented the University's Missouri Honor Award for Distinguished Service in Engineering. Although the award covered his many contributions to the field, Chance was especially cited for the development of a complete x-ray laboratory for the inspection of metal castings.

He is a director of the National Association of Manufacturers; past president and board member of the Associated Industries of Missouri; past president and director of the State Chamber of Commerce; director of the Missouri Public Expenditures Survey; a former Centralia alderman; and former member of the executive committee of the National Council for

Community Improvement. He has also been a member of the Centralia and Boone County Boards of Education.

Most salesmen working for the Chance company are graduate electrical engineers, although engineers in other fields are used both in sales and in the various factories. Many of them are University graduates. One University student, Bill Buss, divides his time between the classroom and Centralia.

Chance's son, Phillip, is returning to the University the second semester with plans of graduating in June. He has been working in the Centralia factory as an electrical engineer. Another son, Jack, completed two years at the University before going into the Navy. He is now stationed at Great Lakes, Ill., but plans to return to school when his service time ends.



Paul A. Gorman

Gorman takes new position

Paul A. Gorman, '29, has been elected vice-president-operations of the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company. He has been vice-president in charge of manufacturing for the Western Electric Company.

Gorman was born in Carrollton, Mo. After his graduation from the University he joined Western Electric at its Hawthorne Works in Chicago as a clerk in accounting. He held various posts at the Chicago plant before going to the Tonawanda plant in Buffalo in 1946 as assistant superintendent of accounting and industrial relations. The following year he was named superintendent.

In 1948 Gorman was named assistant engineer of manufacture at WE headquarters in New York and three years later went to Chicago as central distribution manager. In 1952 he returned to headquarters in New York as personnel director, and the following year was named assistant vice-president in personnel relations with the parent American Telephone & Telegraph Company. He returned to WE in 1954 as vice-president, defense projects, and the following year was named a director of the company. In May, 1956, he was named financial vice-president and in September, vice-president-manufacturing.

Gorman is a director of the Teletype Corp. of Chicago, the Manufacturers' Junction Railway of Chicago, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Nassau Smelting & Refining Company, and the Sandia Corporation, Albuquerque.