

## CHAPTER XIV

. . . . AND THE HUNTER HOME FROM THE HILLS

The Fraser story from its earliest days in Canada, weaves continually around the central theme of the great forests of New Brunswick. So it seems fateful and somehow fitting that they should be the scene of the final hours of the life of a man to whom they had meant so much and who had contributed so greatly to the furtherance of their development in use through the years. On October 10, 1932 while hunting at Nictau, on the Tobique River in Victoria County, with his nephew, Mac Fraser 17, and a guide, Archibald Fraser died of a sudden heart attack. Mr. Fraser, who all through his life had enjoyed good health and spirits, while in the woods, four miles from his lodge, shot a bird, took two steps forward his quarry and fell dead before the shocked eyes of his nephew, and John Clark a guide. They hurriedly placed the body in the canoe and paddled the four miles down the river to the camp. The words of Robert Louis Stevenson's REQUIEM come so readily to mind they might have well been written for Archibald Fraser.

"Under the wide and starry sky  
 Dig the grave and let me lie.  
 Glad did I live,, and gladly die,  
 And I laid me down with a will.  
 This be the verse you 'grave for me:  
 Here he lies where he longed to be;  
 Home is the sailor, home from the sea,  
 And the hunter home from the hill."

A large number of prominent people from all parts of the Province, as well as hundreds of associates and employees paid tribute to the man who had been a friend to so many, as well as one of Canada's Industrial leaders, at an impressive service held at St. Paul's Church, on October 12, 1932. This was the same church that had benefited through the generosity of Archibald Fraser's father, Donald Fraser, who had contributed the Fraser Memorial Hall of that building dedicated in 1916.

The final services were appropriately simple to mark the passing of a man who, although a leading figure in the industrial world, had always enjoyed simplicity in all things.

Rev. G. G. Pringle of Kincardine, a life long friend of the Fraser's, and widely known and loved by all to whom he had been a spiritual advisor since the early days in the Kincardine Colony.

Tributes paid Archibald Fraser spoke of his life, from boyhood in a world of work and ceaseless activity, his deep interest in his employees, the weight accorded his opinions through the rank and file of the lumber industry from lumberjack to experienced executives, his alert memory for faces and names that made him personally known and respected by his two thousand employees in New Brunswick and Quebec. Tribute, too, was paid to the great contribution he and his father and brother had made to the industrial life of the Province, and tribute was paid his character "a good friend to all....a fine type of gentleman, giving great credit for being square and never standing for anything that wasn't straight; quiet and retiring in his ways, yet firm in his principles and sound in his convictions". His interests were in his family, the welfare of those who worked for him and the importance of the industry to which his entire life was devoted. His passing at the age of sixty three closed a life of great usefulness, and importance. He was survived by his wife, Evelyn Whyte Fraser, of Edinburgh, Scotland, whom he had married in London in 1930, and two sons and a daughter of his first marriage to Agnes Dunbar Fraser who died in 1911,....they were Donald and Archibald Fraser, and Nan Fraser (Mrs. Hugh Kennedy) and a brother, Donald Fraser, of Plaster Rock.

Some indication of the prominent position he had attained in his industrial and business life of the Maritimes and the Dominion was indicated by the offices he held at the time of his death. In addition to the Presidency of Fraser Companies, Limited; Fraser Paper, Limited; and Restigouche Company, Limited, he was also a Director of the Royal Bank of Canada and of the New Brunswick Telephone Company, Limited; the Maritime Trust Company; and the Rolland Paper Company; as well as President of Snowflake Lime, Limited. In speaking of him, Thomas M. Matheson, Business associate from the early days, said "Of

all the big lumbermen New Brunswick produced, and these were many, Archibald Fraser led them all - John ~~G~~lasier being the first real operator and Archibald Fraser the last."

.....

Following the death of Archibald Fraser, K. S. MacLachlan, who had been General Manager since 1930 and had been appointed Director in 1931, was elected to succeed Mr. Fraser as President of Fraser Companies, Limited and subsidiaries, Fraser Paper Limited and Restigouche Company, Limited. Donald Fraser, his brother, continued as Vice President, Two vacancies on the Board of Directors occurred at this time resulting from the death of Archibald Fraser and the resignation of George Mead, head of the company which handled the sale of Fraser Paper products in the United States until the company formed its own organization to handle these sales direct. To fill the vacancies, Harold Crabtree<sup>President</sup> of Howard Smith Paper Mills and Lieutenant Colonel Robert F. Massie, President of Asbestos Corporation were elected to the Board. At this/<sup>same</sup>time, T. M. Barry, then Assistant General Superintendent of Fraser Paper Limited, and Donald A. Fraser, head of the Standards Department were appointed to position of Assistant to President of Fraser Companies, Limited, headquarters in Edmundston.

Recovery from the depression of 1929 was slow and Fraser Companies, as others at this time were required to make changes, from time to time, to cope with the difficult conditions existing at this time.

An address given by Harold Crabtree, then President of the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association at thier annual meeting in Montreal, in February 1933, gives some indication of conditions for the industry as a whole in the year 1932. In part, he said: "The past year has been one of great difficulty for the pulp and paper industry. The hope that the year 1932 would see a return to improved business conditions generally manufacturing, etc., was not realized, the level of business being lower than in the previous year with prices showing a corresponding drop, while all branches of the industry were adversely affected.....newsprint suffered most severely....mills engaged

in wood pulp also record a difficult year with prices in a demoralized condition and severe competition from European countries, added by depreciated currencies our mills were obliged to greatly curtail their output, Several mills being closed down entirely. A prolonged strike in the Swedish pulp mills had little or no effect on the situation which remained unsatisfactory throughout the year. Board mills experienced difficulties through increased competition and lower volume at reduced prices. Book and writing mills were less affected by adverse conditions than some of the other branches of the industry although there was a decided decrease in demand on file papers. Decreased production and lack of demand similarly in the wrapping, tissue and other grades of paper...."

Among the retrenchments made at this time, was the closing of the pulp mill at Millbank near Chatham on the Miramichi, owing to unsatisfactory state of the market for unbleached sulphite pulp. This mill had operated from 1920. Its importance to the economic structure of that part of the Province prompted the New Brunswick Government to negotiation with Fraser Companies, Limited, in 1937, attempting to revive operations there to alleviate the crippling effects of the depression in the lumber industry in Northumberland County, where the mill was located. However, the mill was not reopened, although Fraser acted to help relieve unemployment conditions in that heavily forested area. Another move made to meet the trying conditions of that period was the closing of the Madawaska Board Mill with operations suspended in May 1933.

\* \* \* \*

That conditions in Fraser Companies, however, were beginning to brighten in 1933 is indicated by three articles which appeared in the Pulp and Paper Magazine at that time.

On July 13, 1933 the publication reported "Outlook Bright for Fraser Companies Limited. From St. John it is reported that Donald Fraser in a statement to the local press was optimistic as to the operations of Fraser Companies this season adding that more of the mills will be run this year and that a start has already been made at Fredericton. The plant at Plaster Rock, New Brunswick has been operating since May and the mills at Cabana, P.Q. are about ready, whilst the shingle and log mills at Campbellton are being put into condition. The mill at Newcastle will not operate this season. Last year the Fredericton and Campbellton mills were not in operation, Mr. Fraser said, with employment about the usual number of hands adding that orders are coming in well on lumber production and for pulp and paper also. In pulp and paper, the Edmundston and Campbellton plants will operate to some extent this season."

In the issue of September 21st the same publication carried an item headed "Signs of Revival in Canada, with a Montreal dateline, which read "From Edmundston, New Brunswick it is reported that all three pulp and paper plants of Fraser Companies, Limited are now working fulltime and that with a marked improvement in the demand for sulphite pulp, prices are now on a better basis. The Madawaska mill is now being conducted under the NRA, company operations being limited to five working days of eight hours each per week. At the same time wages have been increased to the extent of about \$250,000 the increase being taken care of through a larger volume of business. Lumbering operations of the Fraser Companies have also improved through increased exports to Great Britain."

On December 7, 1933 the Pulp and Paper Magazine reported "Industry activity in New Brunswick" and said, "The Fraser Companies Limited report that approximately 5,000 men will be employed in the woods this winter and the amount of pulpwood obtained will be enough to keep the Athol sulphite mill and the Edmundston sulphite mill and groundwood mill in operation through 1934 and the company will also cut for sawmills at half a dozen other provincial points."

\* \* \* \* \*

Organizational changes which occurred in 1933 were the appointment of R. G. Macfarlane as Manager of Lumber and Logging Departments of Fraser Companies Limited and Restigouche Company Limited, in charge of all lumbering and logging operations carried on by these companies. In October, E. C. Atkinson was appointed Superintendent of the Edmundston Pulpwood Division of Fraser Companies, Limited.

Early in 1934, R. B. Hanson KC, who became Minister of Trade and Commerce the following year, was elected Director of Fraser Companies Limited and subsidiaries, increasing the number of Directors from nine to ten and making available a wealth of valuable experience and knowledge.

A further financial reorganization occurred in Fraser Companies in 1936 for the purpose of disposal of deferred bond interest liabilities. From 1934 to 1936 the annual financial reports of the company showed continual improvement with mills operating at full capacities in 1936 and the outlook for the year of 1937 optimistic. Directors in 1936 and 1937 were A. M. Irvine, Harold Crabtree, A.H. Campbell and H. P. Thornhill of Montreal; S. F. Duncan and E. G. Long of Toronto; F. C. Beatteay St. John and K. S. Mackchlan of Edmundston, who was also President, and General Manager, and Donald Fraser of Plaster Rock, who was also Vice-President.

\* \* \* \* \*

On May 29, 1936 another of the six important Fraser originals passed on. On that date occurred the death of William Matheson, at the age of sixty-nine years, nearly forty years of which had been devoted to an important part in building the success of Fraser Companies, Limited. His career had been a brilliant one but William Matheson left even more than a record of great business success. He left a heritage of high regard, for although modest and unassuming, quiet and almost reticent, he was admired by hundreds of friends who gathered to pay tribute and respect to his memory at the time of his death. Although all of the early formal education he was to have had terminated with grade four in the first crude country school in the Scotchcolony where his family had come in 1873, along with the Frasers and the other Scotch colonists who settled in Kincardine at that time, his lifelong interest in self education had made him one of the best informed men of his time. His

great love of good reading, his quick mind and photographic memory, his ability for apt and accurate quotation and his excellent grasp of current affairs are legendary. Although previously mentioned, a brief review of his contributions to the success of Fraser Companies merits attention at this time. At the age of seventeen he worked in the law office of Hugh Matheson in Woodstock, where he continued until the latter's death. Following this, he started working for Donald Fraser in various capacities, supplementing his early education with a business course in Fredericton. Then, wanting to try his luck elsewhere, he went West, and worked in the lumber business in Northwest Ontario for a period. Following this, he engaged in similar work in Minnesota. He also spent some time selling railway ties to the then fast-growing Canadian Pacific Railroad.

In 1893 Donald Fraser wrote William Matheson inquiring if he would return East to serve as Chief Accountant for the rapidly expanding Fraser lumber interests. The following year, William Matheson returned to join Donald Fraser & Sons in this capacity, and from that date on, he was to engage in a career that was to contribute so materially to the Province's early lumber industry.

In 1896 he married Hannah Elizabeth Wallace in Fredericton and they moved to Cabano, P.Q. where the mill which Donald Fraser had built on Lake Temiscouata was then operating at capacity manufacturing deals for the Trans Atlantic trade. Mrs. Matheson died at an early age, leaving three small children; a son, Cecil, and two daughters, Hannah and ..... In 1902 William Matheson married his wife's sister, Mary Elgiva Wallace. Seven children were born to them - Wallace, Alex, Kenneth, Ewan, Donald, Mary and Isabel. From 1903 to 1905 William Matheson was in charge of the St. John Office of Fraser's. He then returned to Cabano,

where he and his family lived until 1909 when they moved to Andover, a central point for his rapidly expanding responsibilities in connection with the various Fraser interests. In 1918 the Mathesons moved to Edmundston to make their home. William's brother, Thomas, had started working for Donald Fraser on the Odell River in 1890 and in 1905 the St. Francis watershed in Temiscouata and Kamouraska P.Q. was acquired and this expansion began operation in 1906, under a company incorporated as the F & M (Fraser and Matheson) Lumber Company. This brought William Matheson, Thomas Matheson and Andrew W. Brebner, another important figure in Fraser activities into the broadening Fraser lumbering interests, with the three becoming director of present and some future companies and William Matheson becoming Secretary of the various Fraser Companies. In 1917, when the various Fraser lumbering interests were incorporated under Dominion Charter as Fraser Companies Limited, William Matheson became Vice President, a post he continued for the balance of his life.

In 1932 he was elected to the directorate of the Bartibog Boom Company. At the time of his death, in addition to being Vice-President of Fraser Companies Limited, he was General Manager of Fraser Realities, Limited and Secretary-Treasurer of the St. Francis Lumber Company.

He was survived by his wife and ten children, and his two brothers, Alex Matheson of Kincardine, and Thomas Matheson of Edmundston.

Following services, held at the United Church, in Edmundston, the funeral cortege proceeded to the Kincardine colony, where, in true Scotch tradition, pipes led the way to his grave, playing the "Flowers o' the Forest" and "Locaber No More". His death was a great loss to the Church where he was an unfailing benefactor, to the business world where he was a leader and to the community and his family.



In order to protect interests already acquired which were tributary to the Edmundston pulp mill, in 1937 Fraser Companies Limited purchased all of the capital stock of Fraser Realities, Limited, which owned the greater portion of the Temiscouata Seigniory in the Province of Quebec as well as Crown Timber Limits on the St. Francis watershed. In the same year, the Green River Lumber Company properties were purchased, including assignment of the stumpage permit on Green River lands of the New Brunswick Railway Company. In the previous year, the <sup>N</sup>ashwaak Pulp and Paper Company consisting of 9,000 acres in the Parish of North Esk on the Tobique watershed had been purchased.

At this point it is significant to consider the financial status of Fraser Companies Limited and subsidiaries, and their general recovery in relation to the setback which they had suffered in 1932, which had necessitated a reorganization at that time and further reorganization in 1936. It is good to report that their recovery had been accomplished to such an extent that the volume of pulp and paper products sold in 1937 was the highest in the companies' history. The recovery was no doubt brought about by able management during that trying period and close continued adherence to the very concepts on which the early success of the companies had been built.

Other occurrences about this time included the removal of the office of Mr. K. S. MacLachlan from Edmundston to Montreal in 1938. With him from Edmundston went O. E. Horton, W. A. Ketchen, Arthur Rogers and Miss Gill. That fall, Donald Fraser was transferred to the Montreal office to open up the Pulp Sales and Paper Board Sales Departments. When Cecil Matheson returned to the Montreal office in 1939, Donald Fraser and Allan Patten were transferred to the New York office from which the pulp sales in the United States were handled, and W. A. Ketchen and O.E. Horton returned to Edmundston. In 1940 J.T. Mackenzie, who was in charge of Traffic

was transferred from Edmundston to the Montreal office. When he resigned in 1942, A.M. Matheson went to Montreal and took over this post.

\* \* \* \* \*

November 1940 was to mark the passing of the last surviving son of Donald Fraser and Ann Rieth Fraser. On November 15th Donald Fraser, Vice-President of Fraser Companies, Limited and subsidiaries, died suddenly in Moncton, N.B., while there on a business trip, at the age of seventy-three. Born in Deeside, Aberdeenshire, Scotland on August 25, 1867 he had come to New Brunswick with his parents at the age of six. Educated at the Andover Schools, like his brother Archibald, he was early identified with his father in the lumbering business, to which he was to devote his entire life and to which he was to make such fine contributions. The sound business mind and initiative and strict application which he brought to his chosen career helped him rise to one of the highest positions in industrial life in the Province. In addition to being vice-president of Fraser Companies, Limited, as well as member of the advisory board at the time of his death, he was also a Director of Rolland Paper Company and Snowflake Lime, Limited, St. John.

During his lifetime, Donald Fraser was an active worker in the cause of temperance, being head of the New Brunswick Temperance Alliance, In this connection he had associated with him the Lieutenant Governor of the Province, Honorable W. G. Clark. He was survived by his wife, Katherine MacFarlane Fraser, daughter of Henrietta Foster MacFarlane of York County and Alexander MacFarlane of Dunoon, Scotland; two sons, Alexander Fraser and Donald McF. Fraser; and a daughter, Katherine Fraser.

His passing marked another break in the closely woven relationship which had been maintained throughout the early years between his father and brother, the late Donald Fraser and Archibald Fraser, and their close friend and associate, William Matheson, whose death had occurred in May, four years previous. Of the six Scotsmen who had contributed so greatly in building the cornerstone of Fraser Companies and subsidiaries, there now remained only Andrew Brebner and Thomas Matheson.