

1976

Bangor Hydro Electric Company Letter Addressed to Company C.E.O in the Year 2076

Robert N. Haskell

Follow this and additional works at: https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/bangorhydro_news

Recommended Citation

Haskell, Robert N., "Bangor Hydro Electric Company Letter Addressed to Company C.E.O in the Year 2076" (1976). *Bangor Hydro Electric News*. 55.

https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/bangorhydro_news/55

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the Bangor Hydro Electric Company at Bangor Community: Digital Commons@bpl. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bangor Hydro Electric News by an authorized administrator of Bangor Community: Digital Commons@bpl. For more information, please contact ccoombs@bpl.lib.me.us.

BANGOR HYDRO-ELECTRIC CO.

33 STATE STREET

BANGOR, MAINE 04401

ROBERT N. HASKELL
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

(207) 945-5621

May 28, 1976

Mr. Charles F. Bragg 2nd
N. H. Bragg & Sons
92 Perry Road
Bangor, Maine 04401

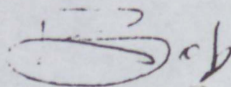
Dear Charlie:

Here is a third and final effort to please you with a letter to some boss person in the year 2076.

In your instructions I note a hint that the thing might see the light of day real soon. I like the procedure I learned when I offered to give to the State Museum the Governor's Chair that Ed Muskie used for the four years that he was in Augusta. All fine, they said, but if you give it to us now it will be locked up in storage and placed on display right after Ed's funeral. So be it with the attached!

If my possession of Ed's chair confuses you, Ed wanted me to take his used chair so he could lug off my new chair. I was all happy. The chairs are back breakers. Try it the next time you are in my office.

Sincerely yours,



R. N. Haskell

Enc.

BANGOR HYDRO-ELECTRIC CO.

33 STATE STREET

BANGOR, MAINE 04401

ROBERT N. HASKELL
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

(207) 945-5621

June 1, 1976

Chief Executive Officer
Electric Utility Serving
Eastern Maine in the Year 2076

Dear Sir or Madam:

In this Bicentennial Year, 1976, Bangor Hydro-Electric Company supplies the counties of Penobscot, Hancock, Washington and parts of Piscataquis with electric service to about 80,000 users.

The enterprise had a very modest origin in 1887 when the first electric generator was installed on Cross Street in downtown Bangor. It was a small direct current unit with a total capacity to light 395 incandescent street lights. At that time it became one of some 400 lighting companies in the United States. Altogether, these companies had invested capital of less than \$10 million.

From this modest start, Bangor soon became the first New England community to have an electric street railway. On April 29, 1889, the first trolley car, open and sixteen feet in length, traveling at a rate of six miles per hour, made its debut. One newspaper's account, fired with the enthusiasm of the day, described the event as ranking with the Seven Wonders of the World.

As it is today, generating capacity was soon inadequate to meet the demand for more street lights and extensions of the street railway system. To meet demands for more electricity the site of an old lumber mill in Veazie was chosen and the Veazie hydro-electric plant was ready in 1891. It was the first hydro station in Maine. By 1900 the plant was supplying the power to operate over thirty miles of street railways, about ten thousand electric lamps and nearly one hundred horsepower in small motors, all in Bangor, four and one-half miles from the plant.

But, all was not well with the ambitious venture - by now the Public Works Company. It was increasingly beset by financial difficulties. F. M. Laughton, the president, and F. H. Clergue, the treasurer, found themselves hopelessly in debt to what is now the General Electric Company. In 1902, President Coffin of General Electric Company came to Bangor with John R. Graham, a successful shoe manufacturer in Quincy, Massachusetts. Graham had successfully reorganized the Quincy and Boston Street Railway Co.,

John R. Graham was impressed with what he saw in Bangor - the Penobscot River with all of its tributaries, the available labor and the cheap hydro-electric generation. With General Electric in control of the company, agreements were soon worked out and Graham became President of Bangor Railway and Electric Company on February 16, 1905. Security dealers, one in New York and one in Philadelphia, worked out new financing and the company was soon operating on a sound financial basis, showing an average of seven percent on invested capital.

Meantime, new rails were laid, new trolley wires were strung and distribution lines were extended. In 1907 the Penobscot Central was purchased, extending railway service, both freight and passenger, to Kenduskeag, East Corinth and Charleston. Quickly following the rail service came the distribution lines for power and light.

The Bodwell Water Company, owners of the Milford generation station, was acquired, enabling the Bangor Railway & Electric Co., as it was then called, to furnish wholesale power to nearby pulp and paper companies along the Penobscot River.

By now, John R. Graham realized that the eventual successful future of the Company was to depend more and more upon revenues from electric service rather than street railways. By 1909 he had acquired the electric light companies in Ellsworth and Bar Harbor and by transmission lines had tied together Bangor, Ellsworth and Bar Harbor.

In 1911, disaster struck Bangor. The biggest fire in New England history ravaged fifty-five acres of business and residential property. Nearing his sixty-fifth year and not well, John R. Graham, with complete faith in the future of his adopted home, emerged the acknowledged leader in the rebuilding effort. He immediately rebuilt the company facilities damaged in the fire and on his own constructed five new downtown mercantile buildings, including the six-story Graham Building.

With the death of John R. Graham in 1915, the executive responsibility fell upon his youngest son, Edward M. Graham. Among his many major accomplishments that served to expand the Company and its capacity to serve eastern Maine were these. In the year 1923, Graham Lake dam was constructed, giving to the Ellsworth power plant a large water storage facility on the Union River. All of the then subsidiary companies were consolidated into the present Bangor Hydro-Electric Company. The incorporation became effective August 5, 1924. In 1927, the Millinocket property was acquired. The years 1926 and 1927 saw the small Washington County utilities acquired and the transmission system extended from Ellsworth to Eastport. In 1930 the hydro stations at Stillwater and Orono were purchased. Acquisition of the hydro stations at Howland and Medway were recorded in 1931. From that time until after World War II, other small systems were purchased, including properties in Hancock,

Penobscot and Piscataquis Counties. The Company service area now extended north to Millinocket, south to the Atlantic Coast and east to the Canadian Border at Eastport.

When capital goods became available following World War II, generating capacity was again a major problem and the Company, for the first time, installed oil-burning generating stations. About 30,000 KW in distillate oil installations and 60,000 KW in residual oil steam units came on line during the following fifteen years.

December 31, 1950 recorded the sale of the transportation operation. Electric street cars had been gradually replaced with buses after routes had been shortened. The sale brought to an end over sixty years of urban transportation responsibilities in the Bangor area

By the time of his death on April 20, 1961, Edward M. Graham had earned the respect and the gratitude of a wide range of individuals. All recognized his vision as equal to that of his distinguished father, John R. Graham, and his accomplishments were recorded in many other business endeavors, including banking, railroad operations and countless civic endeavors.

Robert N. Haskell took over the chief executive officer responsibilities following the death of Mr. Graham. He was an engineering graduate from the University of Maine in 1925 and became a Vice President in 1928, General Manager in 1935 and President in 1958.

Mr. Haskell, who served a short five days as Governor of Maine in 1958, the same year that he followed Edward M. Graham as President, turned the presidency over to his Vice President and Treasurer, Thomas A. Greenquist, in 1976. By that time the Company had invested about \$65 million in its original cost plant accounts and had raised nearly \$50 million in capital. Customer demands had reached about 175,000 kilowatts and yearly kilowatt sales had passed the billion mark.

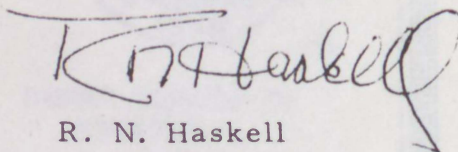
To the north and east, three hundred forty-five thousand volt transmission lines now connect the Company with the Canadian Maritime grid which is connected with the Quebec system. To the south the Company is similarly tied in with the New England transmission grid. As tied together, the two grids - Maritime and New England - have a generating capability of well over twenty-five thousand megawatts.

Looking to the problems of the electric utilities facing the industry in at least the first few decades of the third century of this nation, no one denies that future energy sources add up to the major concern if world-wide poverty is to be avoided in the world where the four billion people are projected to be eight billion very early in the years following 2000. Non-renewable energy sources - coal, oil and gas - even by the most optimistic projections, are inadequate to meet energy needs of a poverty free world in the early 2000's. Hydro-electric installations can add little to the total need, while the more exotic sources - tidal power, solar power and wind power - seem now to offer little in long-term economic solutions.

As this second century closes, the one remaining hope appears to be the atom. Maine, one of the leaders in nuclear generation of electricity, is successfully operating a unit with generating capability of 800,000 KW and has plans for another 1,100,000 unit to come on line in the mid-1980's. But, dedicated environmentalists, frightened by the horrible death tolls from the use of the atom in aggressive warfare, are dividing the country in their hope to ban the peaceful use of nuclear reaction. If time records their success, the fear of world-wide poverty may well be the final result.

So, as a concluding comment on this pessimistic overview of our third century energy problems, maybe, just maybe, fusion power could be the answer. Fusion power had the potential of a substantially inexhaustible source of fuel so clean that even the most avid environmentalist could find nothing to complain about. Right now, in this 1976 year, achieving fusion by the energy released from the merging of the nuclei of light elements has not been solved, but, only hopefully, industry and governments, world wide, will combine in the effort to find the solutions in this, the most promising of all of the presently known hopes.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. N. Haskell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "H".

R. N. Haskell
Chairman