

## CHEMICO

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By James Collins

In 1974, my company Kollsman Instruments was planning to move to Nashua New Hampshire but I did not want to go. Family connections got me an interview with Chemico an international manufacturing company, which fabricated major chemical industrial complexes. Chemico reported to Aerojet Gen., which reported to RKO, which reported in turn to General Tire. This was a highly successful industrial, conglomerate.

I was a program manager with Kollsman and the interview went very well. Chemico had just successfully bid on an ammonium plant on the Volga River in Russia. I met with the program manager and he was interested in having me as his assistant because of my experience. Tom C. vice president of personnel was an alumnus of my college and we got along famously. Chemical itself consisted of 23,000 people and had an enormous building on 23<sup>rd</sup> St. in Midtown Manhattan. It had projects all over the world and had a marvelous reputation.

Negotiations were ongoing about benefits and some of the problems associated with doing an international contract and spending several months at a time in Russia. They estimated the construction time to be between one and two years but at the end of the contract, I would return to New York and during the program could maintain my house and my family in New York City. Rotations back and forth from Russia were a major source of discussion.

Halfway into the second week I got a call from the vice president of personnel.

“Jim I’m very sorry to tell you we have to withdraw our offer of the job with the ammonium plant in Russia.”

“Tom, what happened? Did I do or say something wrong?”

“No Jim it had nothing to do with you at all. Apparently, the bid we submitted had a major error in the calculation. Instead of \$150 million, the true cost is more than double that. This was an international contract with very specific restrictions, which could not be renegotiated. The plant must be fabricated built and delivered at the price submitted on the bid. This would be a major financial hit to the organization and is not acceptable to management. This problem traversed through the various operations going all the way to the top. There have been very heavy discussions all weekend on this matter and the decision is hard to believe. The only way the Corporation can avoid this major financial disaster is to totally close down Chemico and have it vanish as an entity in the organization. Even as we speak all 23,000, Chemico employees have been notified of the dissolution of the

**Corporation. The company is closing down this month. We're selling the building and all employees are being phased out and being terminated."**

**"Tom, are you all right? Can you handle this?"**

**"Fortunately I'm human resources and we have many other companies throughout the country where I can apply my talents. Many of the top managers are to be picked up by the other organizations. If you have an interest in going to the West Coast I can set up some interviews for you out there and you may find a fit."**

**"Thanks for a much for the concern Tom. As you know the only reason I applied here was to keep from having to go to New Hampshire because it would separate us so much from the rest of the family. I still have a management position there and I believe New Hampshire would be less of a separation than California. Please thank everyone for all the effort they have extended on my behalf and tell him I hope none of them will suffer from this event. It is been a pleasure meeting all the people in this organization and I am sorry for your problems."**

**A year later, I learned that Tom was functioning as vice president in one of the divisions on the West coast and was doing quite well. I spent the next forty years in New Hampshire and never regretted my decision. My family has prospered here beyond my wildest dreams.**

**THE END**