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" ,." Catchers at work in the Rod Mill. The white, snaking line is hot metal. It is getting thinner as it is caught and turned back and passes through the rollers. do that. But the last one at dinnertime, if I missed that, I had to go down and wind it up. And I Hidn't miss any. I could get ahold of it all right. And then I got the last one at the end of the day. That wouldn't interfere with anybody, they're all gone to dinner and they're all going home. And that's the way I broke in. When I got catching, I was only on it for 10 years, and this was as a spare catcher for most of those years. We had a 6-catcher mill. They didn't need me on the 7th. "Jhen they came to an 8-catcher mill, I would go on, with another one. I would on? ly be on the mill when there'd be 7 or 8-- and this would be occasionally. But then, when the mill went from one shift of 10 hours a day to two shifts of 10 hours a day, then I got promoted, I was on catch? ing continuously for about 7 years. Then she went 3 shifts (8 hours each), But in the meantime, I had been promoted from catching to roughing. Where I used to be in charge of 2 pair of rollers, now I was in charge of 6 pair of rollers, with 3 helpers, I was responsible for setting those rollers up and getting the stuff out in its proper shape. She goes straight line in the 6th. But when it comes to the 7th roller, the catcher grabs it, turns a- round and puts it in 8, and it whisks a- round to 9. He'll catch it, stick it in 10; it'll go around to 11. And he puts it into 12, which is the last one--and that's the finished product. And each one of these rollers is gradually reducing it to size. And there is a man there who is a finisher--this was finally my job--and the way finishing works is this: the roller will send the right a- mount of stock from the first roll to the 11th, so that I can manipulate it so that the finished product will be just what the customer wants within seven thousandths. I have a stick. As the finished bar comes by, I put the stick down one side and it burns an impression on the stick. Then I get an? other impression burned on the other side. I read those impressions, whether there is enough thickness on that bar or too much. And I can adjust that before it gets into the 11th stand. If I've got too much, I've got to reduce it by closing the 11th. And I've got to be right there because she's coming, boy, just like that, one after an? other, I suppose 35 miles an hour. But they're only coming a little bit apart. They're coming around nearly end to end. Sometimes it's so close that the catcher is confused, that he grabs the last end of the one ahead. So he's pretty cagey. When it's coming around, it's in the dark and he can't see it coming. But when it comes out of number 10, that's when we'll say there's a few inches he can see. Now, when he sees the reflection--not the bar-- 'cause when it's coming around it casts a reflection ahead of it--and when he sees that reflection, he says to himself, like I've said many times: "one, two," and catch. You don't say "three" because she's gone. You're catching with nothing there. And when you do it right, it's there--just the length for you to whip it into the next one. And the heat is terrific. 120 degrees in there, saturated with pollution and dust. Smoke. Oh my god, perspiring. Not as a finisher, but as a catcher. As a finisher I'm just standing there burning wood all day. But I'm making the final adjustments, and when it goes by me, it's good or bad. And



there's inspectors up there accepting it or rejecting it. If he gets too many rejected he comes down, something wrong, getting too much scrap. And that rejection is thrown off the bed and they chop it up and put it in scrap pans and ship it back to Mr. Hines there, and they make it all over again. But we've rolled many, many days without one rejection. We've rolled a thousand billets a day and we wouldn't lose one. It's remarkable. Your community news can be found in your local weekly newspaper. Community newspapers serving eastern Nova Scotia...  
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