Jim Walker asks:
Can a mechanical engineer make real progress in a chemical firm?

"Pick" Pickering answers:

Well, Jim, that's what the lawyers call a leading question, and the answer leads right into my bailiwick. I came to Du Pont in 1940, after taking a combined mechanical and electrical engineering course. So I had what you might call a double row for wondering about my future with a chemical firm.

I soon learned that the success of a large-scale chemical process is vitally dependent upon mechanical equipment. And the success of this mechanical equipment—especially for a new process—depends on (1) Research, (2) Development, (3) Plant Engineering, and (4) Close Supervision. The net result is that a mechanical engineer at Du Pont can progress along any one of these four broad highways to a top-level position.

My own Du Pont experience includes mechanical engineering work in fields as varied as atomic energy, fisheries and sports, and management. As one of these brought with it a new set of challenging problems in construction, instrumentation, and power supply, and even one provided the sort of opportunities a man gets in a pioneering industry.

So, to answer your question, Jim, a mechanical engineer certainly has plenty of chances to get somewhere with a chemical company like Du Pont!