

Amerotron Conference

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and plans for the future, with a look at the picture in Textron-American, the parent company, of which Mr. Huffines is also the head.

Other Executives On Hand
On hand for the press conference, in addition to Mr. Huffines, were:

Robert P. Holding, Smithfield, a director of Textron-American, a special guest; Herman E. Goodman, director of public relations, advertising and sales promotion; R. M. Cushman, executive vice-president of manufacturing; F. R. Gramelsbach, director of industrial relations; F. T. Roberts, in charge of administration and manufacturing, Area B; J. B. Campbell, personnel director, Area B; and W. H. Burroughs, controller and assistant treasurer.

Mr. Holding, Mr. Cushman and Mr. Burroughs took part in the press conference, with Mr. Huffines.

Press representatives present were H. Clifton Blue of The Sandhill Citizen, Aberdeen; Nelson C. Hyde of The Pinehurst Outlook; Paul Dickson of The News-Journal at Raeford; the editor of the weekly newspaper at Barnwell, S. C.; Mrs. Valerie Nicholson, local correspondent for State dailies; and Mrs. James Boyd of The Pilot.

The Mid Pines event was the second of such meetings of key men held since the merger of the Big Three: Robbins Mills, Textron and American Woolen, last February. It will be an annual affair, bringing in this section the leading men in all phases of this business. Many of those of the Sandhills plants, of course, live here and Mr. Huffines himself continues to live in Pinehurst where he expects to spend, as last year, several of the winter months.

Diversification Going Well
In his remarks to the press, the president said that the policy of diversification, set by the company as a goal last spring, was going right ahead. Textron-American was rapidly achieving its aim of a half textile, half non-textile basis of produc-

tion, with Amerotron devoted entirely to the textile side. The drive for diversification, conceived as a cushion against too much concentration, has resulted in the acquisition of a variety of non-textile operations, all independently operated, autonomous companies. In the textile field, Amerotron has added a new plant in Barnwell, S. C., for the production of fine woolens. This is the first plant to be built by the new company.

Amerotron ranks fourth in the nation in the textile field, Mr. Huffines pointed out. He said that all inefficient technical operations had by now been weeded out of the mills and each was a completely modernized plant. As for finances, while the company was not yet entirely in the clear since the merger of last winter, the credit gain, he said, has been steady and more than satisfactory.

Local Personnel
Consolidation of the all manufacturing administration in Aberdeen will mean the addition of from 50 to 75 workers, Mr. Huffines said, with a slightly lower number needed for the accounting department. The employee count at Raeford will also go up because of the installation there of the dyeing and processing works.

Employee count at Raeford now stands at about 1,250. A hundred new looms will be added at that plant during the next three months. Mr. Huffines said that the labor situation in all the area is "excellent."

Why No Expansion For This Area?
Questioned about future expansion in this section, Mr. Huffines disappointed his listeners. None was planned, he said. "Actually," the president elaborated, "there are still too many handicaps in the way of textile expansion in this area."

Mr. Huffines said the main handicap was the high cost of electric power, a costly item in textile operations. Stating that the new Barnwell woolen plant might have been built here instead of in South

Carolina, had it not been for this drawback, Mr. Huffines described the difference in power rates available in the South Carolina-Georgia area and reminded his hearers that Textron had built five plants in these states during the last six years, a move made mainly, he said, because of cheaper power.

"The excessive costs charged by the Carolina Power and Light Company," said the textile man, "constitute a serious objection to locating mills here. Their rates are from 15 to 20 per cent higher."

Town, Post Office Praised
Further criticism, mixed with praise, followed, as the listeners tried to get the whole picture. Mr. Huffines highly complimented the Southern Pines town government and post office staff, as well as "your effective congressional representation," for greatly improved postal service, but his opinion of the telephone service was hardly so high.

"The telephone service is still atrocious," he said, "and that's a fact. There are no other words for it."

Mr. Huffines had little good to say of the United Telephone Co. of the Carolinas, that serves this area. He said that his company had circumvented some of the difficulties run into on long distance calls through the Southern Pines central office, by putting in direct lines from New York and the individual plants. In this connection, he spoke of the cooperative attitude of the Aberdeen people in contrast to Southern Pines. "We have gotten absolutely nowhere with the Southern Pines office," he said.

Asked about the plans, as announced by the telephone company, for improved service through new machines to be installed within two years, the executive said. . . and he was joined by others of his company present. . . "I can see no reason for such a long wait. It's hard to imagine why there should be such delay."

Following the press conference with the president, the group adjourned for a buffet lunch, served by Mrs. Frank Cosgrove and her staff.

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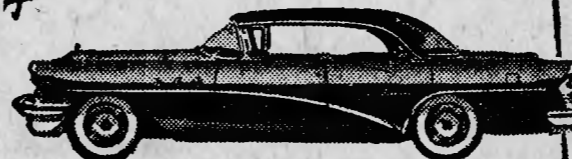


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