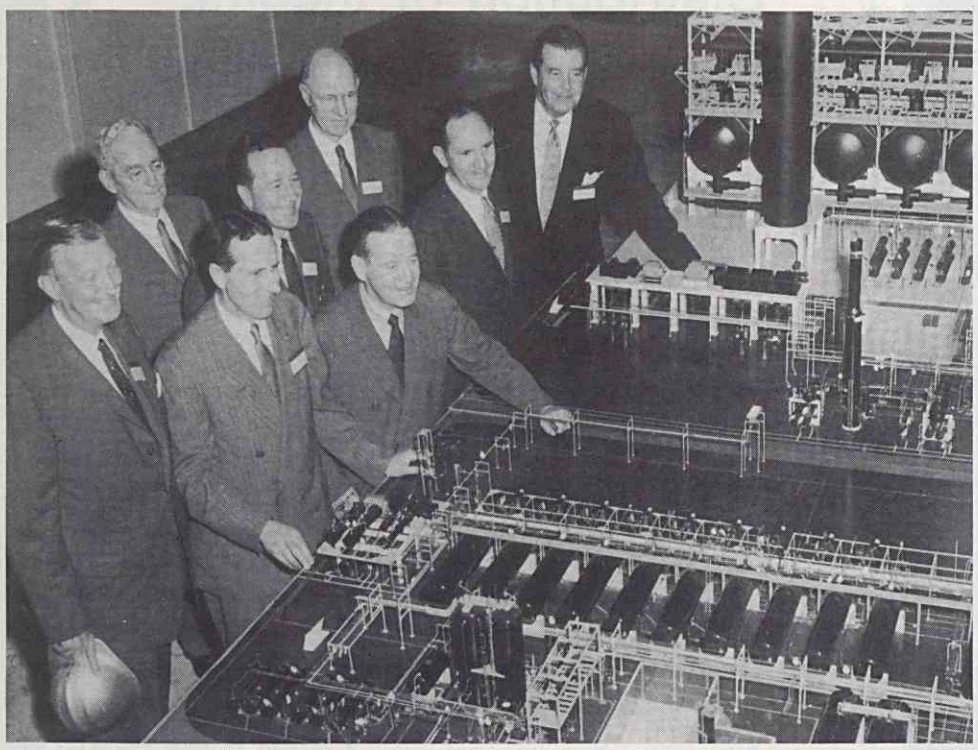
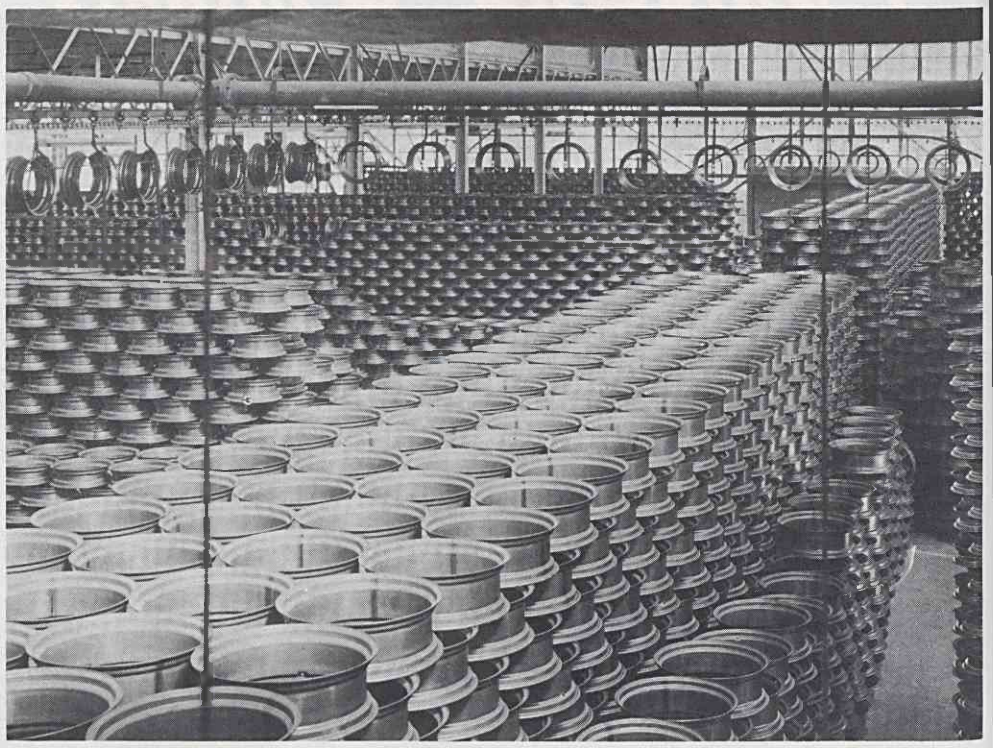
Major Additions Made In Plants, Equipment



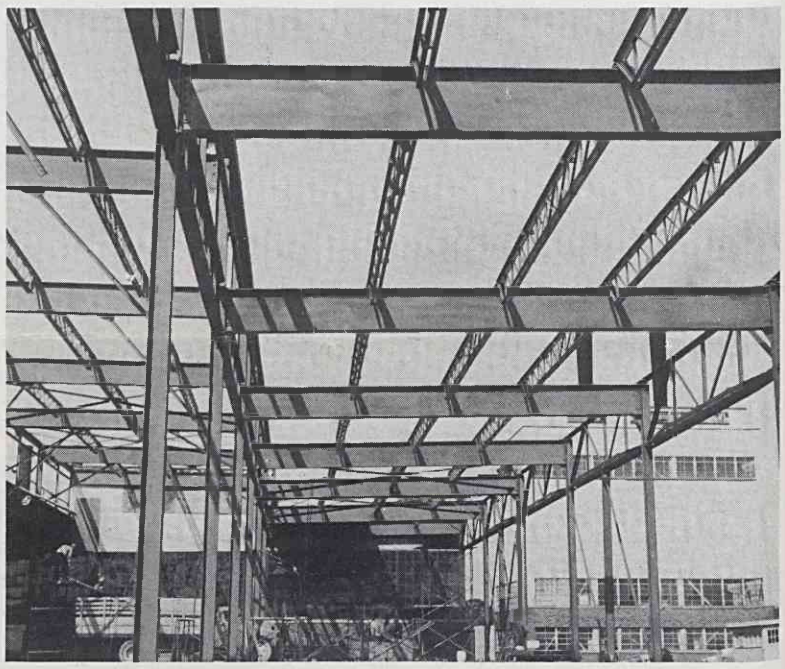
THE BUTADIENE PLANT at the new petrochemical center at Orange, Tex., was officially opened by the board of directors. Above, the directors look at a scale model of the plant. Left to right, in front, are Joseph Thomas, Raymond C. Firestone, Harvey S. Firestone, Jr., Roger S. Firestone and J. E. Trainer. Second row, left to right, John J. Shea, Leonard K. Firestone and H. H. Hollinger.



DURING THE YEAR the Electric Wheel Company at Quincy, Ill., was acquired to enlarge the scope of metal products activities. Large quantities of rims, wheels and other products are produced annually by this new Firestone division. The warehouse is shown, above. The division employs approximately 800 people. Its products are principally for agricultural and earth moving equipment.

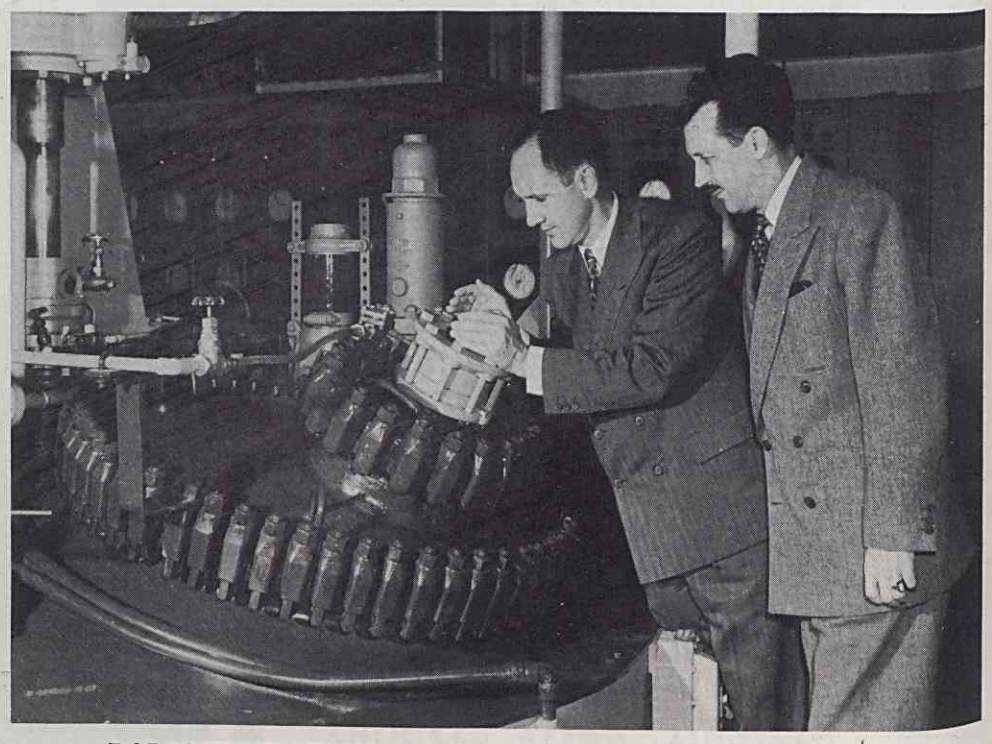
THE COVER — During 1957, the company maintained its position as the world's largest producer of rubber. The new plant, which went "on stream" during the year at Orange, Tex., to make butadiene, the principal ingredient of synthetic rubber, will contribute greatly to the continued maintenance of this position. The cover photo shows one of the processes of the plant. Following the first and basic step — dehydrogenation of butane vapor to break it down into butadiene, hydrogen and other hydrocarbons — the gases go to the quench towers pictured on the cover for quick cooling.

A NEW FACTORY for the manufacture of air springs to be marketed as "Airide by Firestone" began operation in Noblesville, Ind. Here Raymond C. Firestone (second from right) visits the plant. With him are B. J. Ferkes, plant manager, and employees, Ellen Williams and Lenora Shaul.



MAJOR ADDITIONS were made to plants at home and abroad. A multimillion-dollar expansion program at the Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, plant was started. Additional tire or home and auto supply warehouse facilities were constructed at Los Angeles, Omaha and Portland.

PRODUCTION FACILITIES were increased for tires, natural and synthetic rubber, polyurethane foam, Velon plastics, Exon basic resins for plastics, nylon resins, metal products and textiles. Pictured above is the new line at the Fall River, Mass., plant for production of polyurethane foam used for automobile dash panels.



POLYMERIZATION, or forming of solids, to produce Exon vinyl resins takes place in these 3,500-gallon glass-lined reactors in the resin plant expanded during the year at Pottstown, Pa. Roger S. Firestone (left), president of the Firestone Plastics Company, and E. T. Handley, executive vice president, watch the process.