

DEMONSTRATION OF FREE ENTERPRISE

# Company A Good Will Envoy

When The Firestone Tire & Rubber Company sold its first tires in the fall of 1900, its sales horizons did not extend much beyond the Middle West and the East Coast of the United States. Today, our products are sold in some 200 countries around the world.

This international growth began shortly after the company was founded. In 1903 a Firestone distributorship was established in Cuba. It was also in Cuba—in 1957—that Firestone established one of its newest plants.

During the early years, when the company was rapidly growing, it devoted expansion energy to domestic activities. This was to be the rock-like base on which all future growth would rest.

Although we concentrated on American customers for the first 15 years, we felt more and more a demand for tires to be used on American vehicles in other countries, and began to see an increase in our export business.

### Our First Plant Outside United States

At Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in 1919 Firestone started its first tire factory outside the United States. A year or two earlier, the company had established overseas sales outlets in London and Buenos Aires. Soon after this, we began operating a rubber-grading and preparation plant in Singapore to assure highest-quality natural rubber for Firestone tires and other products.

In the 1920s, direct factory branches were established in France, India, New Zealand, Spain, and the Philippines. In 1928, we built our own factory at Brentford, England, near London, and two years later, constructed a tire factory in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

From 1930 until the beginning of World War II, hundreds of new distributorships and factory branches were established throughout the world. Other countries where Firestone manufacturing is now being carried on are: South Africa, Switzerland, Brazil, Sweden, Venezuela, West Germany, Mexico, and Portugal.

### The Company in Liberia, West Africa

American business can be, in a sense, an industrial ambassador, practicing the philosophy of the United States by demonstrating benefits of free enterprise. There is no more striking example of this than what our company has done in Liberia, West Africa. When we first began our plantations there in 1926, Liberia was one of the least developed countries of the world. Today the picture is quite different. In a study of our operations in Liberia issued in 1956, the National Planning Association wrote:

"Firestone had an impact on Liberia that extends far beyond the boundaries of the planta-

This is the third of five articles written at the request of The Christian Science Monitor, by Harvey S. Firestone Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of the company.

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tions and prevades almost every aspect of Liberian life. Part of this impact has been the result of a conscious effort by Firestone. The rest has been the unintentional, though inevitable, consequence of the presence of the company in the country, of its attitudes and of the way in which it has conducted its business.

"In sum, it is not an exaggeration to say that the coming of Firestone three decades ago was a decisive event in the modern history of Liberia. It started an economic and social transformation. It has given Liberia an international importance which it otherwise might not have attained."

The study went on to point out that Firestone is the largest employer, taxpayer, importer, and exporter in Liberia, that it has been the country's largest trainer of human skills, and that it has been the pace-setter in labor relations, health and education standards, productive efficiency, research, development and enterprise.

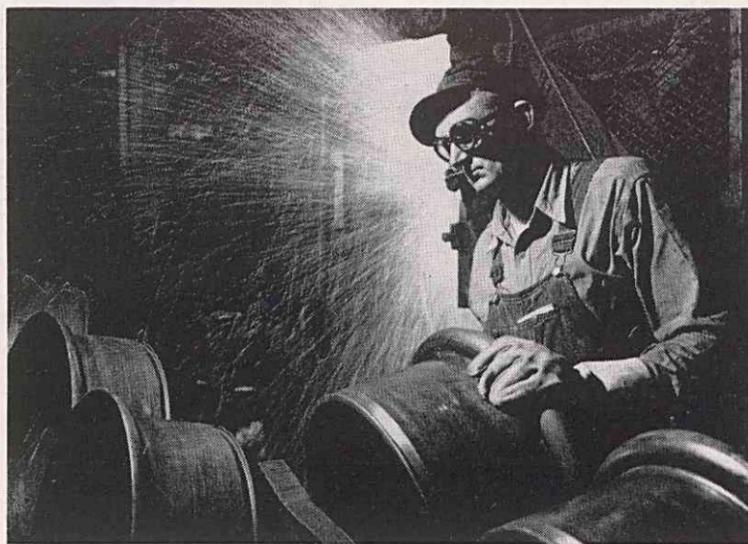
### Help for Native Planters

Our company gives free seedling rubber trees and technical assistance to any Liberian who wishes to establish a rubber farm on his own land. We work with the Liberians who take advantage of this program by helping them survey their land and plan a planting program. When their trees begin to yield rubber, we purchase their output at the prevailing world price.

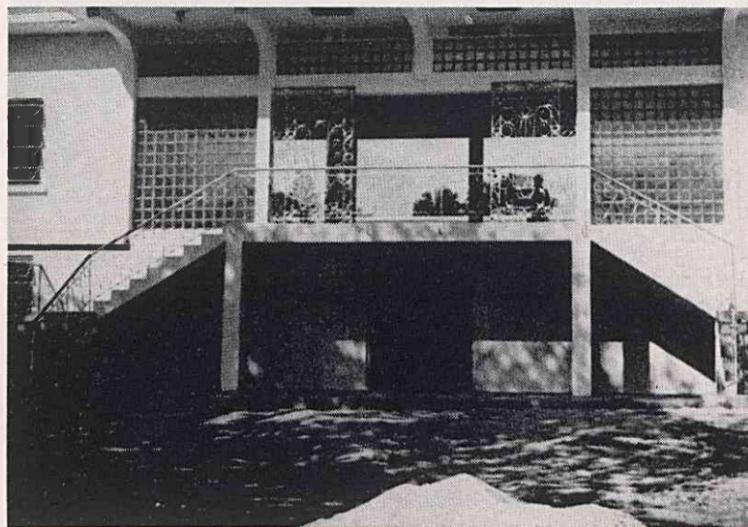
If the farmer requests it, we inspect his rubber trees and advise him how to improve the care, cultivation, and tapping of his trees. We make available to him a complete management plan, including technical, bookkeeping, and other necessary systems of operation.

We feel that by establishing Liberians in their own commercial endeavors and by helping to create local businesses with modern methods, we are helping the country to export more rubber and to impart the spirit of competitive free enterprise.

Encouragement of private investment in underdeveloped countries is officially part of United States foreign policy today. To my mind, it is also equally important to consider investment by American business in developed countries.



Steel rims for truck, bus and tractor tires are rolling off assembly lines at Firestone. The company began manufacture of such rims in 1909.



At the University of Liberia in Monrovia, the Harvey S. Firestone Science Building is an example of American business investment for international understanding. This is the entrance to the building, made possible largely by a Firestone gift of \$50,000.

## 237 Vehicles Had Defects

Of the 808 cars and trucks processed in safety-check lanes at the plant this spring, 237 were rejected because of one or more mechanical or other defects. And of the number which did not make the grade, 101 were corrected, returned to the lanes, then marked OK for the road.

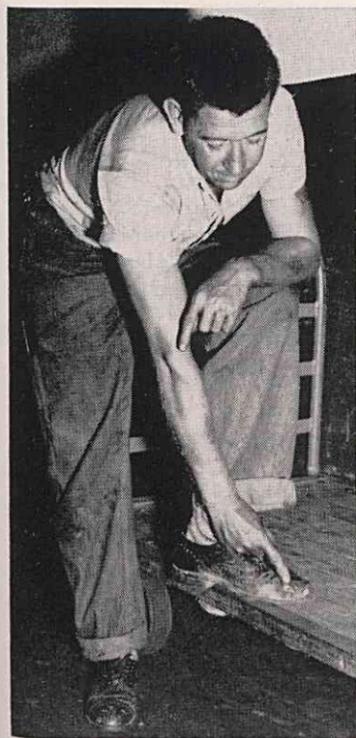
The 166 out-of-order rear lights constituted the greatest number of defects on all vehicles processed. Next in line were tires, with 54 defects; then front lights, with 53.

Further breakdown of the summary report of vehicles safety checked revealed defects occurring in this order:

Brakes, 30; exhausts, 29; glass, 5; horn, 4. No defects were found on these items: Rear view mirror, steering, windshield wipers.

This is the second year the Firestone company has made the free inspection available to employees, and to other motorists in the Gastonia area.

The company operates the program each year in areas where it has major manufacturing facilities and sales outlets. The setup is in cooperation with the Inter-Industry Highway Safety Committee, which promotes check lanes in more than 1,000 communities of the 34 states which do not require motor vehicle inspection.



## This Man 'Sold' On Safety Shoes

Jesse Liles of Weaving (SYC) is very much a believer that performance is the best testimonial for safety footwear. Two near-injury experiences while working here have convinced him of that.

The loom mechanic recalls that several years ago he was lucky to escape a serious injury. In Spinning, a falling steel roller landed within a hair's breadth of his foot. He was wearing open sandals.

"That experience set me to thinking, and I've been a safety-shoe wearer ever since—both

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Mr. Liles calls attention to the place where a power mower couldn't bite — because safety footwear was on the job.

on and off the job," he says.

When he cranked his power mower recently, heavy vibrations caused the machine to crawl backwards, taking a vicious slash at his left foot. No harm done. The impact was great enough to bend the mower blade, but failed to cut through the metal toecap of the shoe.

All of North Carolina's 100 counties have county health services. The State Board of Health governs sanitation in the public interest, in such fields as water supplies, public eating places, and camps.

## This Student, Handy With Needle, Sewed The Principal A Summer Suit

When Principal Chris E. Folk took the platform at the recent commencement program of North Carolina Vocational Textile School, he was sporting a trim summer suit tailored by a Firestone employee's wife.

Mrs. Tom Mathis, whose hus-

band works in Carding — and who herself once worked in Weaving (cotton) — received a certificate for completion of the basic course in tailoring at the Belmont school.

She had done well in class, earning the distinction of being one of four in the two tailoring classes to rate as honor students. But her talents really glittered when it came to "lab" work. Students in the basic course in tailoring don't usually advance beyond a project in trouser-making.

Mrs. Mathis was putting the finishing touches to the coats to men's suits some weeks before she finished the course.

Besides the suit which she tailored for Mr. Folk, she has turned out three others at the school—one for her husband, and one each for J. Warren Smith, head of North Carolina's system of vocational schools; and Esby Inman, a Gastonia grocer.

In September, Mrs. Mathis will enroll for the advanced course in tailoring. She will attend classes on the 8:20 to 1 p.m. schedule, five days a week.

It is easier to do a job right than to explain why you didn't. —Martin Van Buren

## 19 Minutes To Earn A Profit

After subtracting the cost of raw materials, payroll needs, taxes and all of the other costs of doing business, the average American industrial plant has only 19 minutes remaining out of each working day in which to earn its profit. This fact was established recently from statistics gathered by the National Association of Manufacturers.