

B. R. Farmer

# Why industry is being 'shipped out' of the U.S.

By Year 2000, there will be very little manufacturing in the United States.

"Ten years ago that statement would have sounded absurd. But today, more and more people believe it could be true," wrote B. R. Farmer in "Why Industry is Leaving the U.S."

The article was published in a recent issue of *America's Textiles* magazine. The author earlier had presented his work at a meeting of the International Society of Industrial Fabric Manufacturers, a group he was instrumental in founding in 1974.

Farmer, Firestone Textiles division technical service representative, noted in his article that in the 1970's plant closing in the U.S. began to speed up and new plants were being opened in other parts of the world. He pointed out:

"Almost every time there is a plant closing, the loss to the U.S. is a foreign gain. Jobs are lost, profits no longer exist, and our tax base and balance of payments will ultimately suffer."

As technical service representative, Farmer's job has involved extensive travel; in many parts of the world he has

seen the evolution of the Third World and the loss of U.S. economic leadership.

When he was manager of the Company's Argentine textile plant in the late 1960's, internal turmoil and economic inconsistencies eroded that country's stable economy to a chaotic state with almost 800 percent annual inflation.

After he returned to the U.S., that experience led Farmer to begin seeing some of the same destructive elements at work in his native country. His article, calling attention to "the U.S. economic suicide," took him 5 years to research and write.

As to the "why" industry is being "shipped out" of this country, Farmer's article lists 6 causes:

1) High wages not on the basis of training or skill of workers, 2) Low productivity, 3) inconsistent and excessive government regulations, 4) Increasing numbers of workers with low skills, 5) High costs of product liability, 6) Management's slowness to adapt to change and its lack of commitment to competition on technical grounds.

"Survival of industry is the same as ever — invest, innovate, lead and create. This calls for leaders, not controllers," Farmer concluded.



## Shopping for shoes

Firestone employees bought 110 pairs of safety shoes when the W. E. Burroughs Co. of Charlotte stopped its rolling store for a day at the Gastonia plant this spring.

Here, checking some shoes (front row, from left): Patricia Taylor, respooler operator learner in TC Twisting; Rebecca Watkins, loomknitter trainee in TC Weaving; Billy Kendrick, twister operator, TC Twisting. Second: Candace Watkins, respooler operator learner, TC Twisting; Ronnie McPherson, shoemobile driver-storekeeper and former Firestone employee. Back: David Hutchen, carpenter 4th cl., Shop; Eddie Seagle, storekeeper, Supply.

## Needed: 117 a month. Turned in yours?

•Goal for the 1980-81 fiscal year at Firestone-Gastonia is 1400 suggestions turned in. In May — just past the mid-point — the Suggestion Committee had received and considered 758 ideas. Of these submitted, 87 were approved and 95 more were under investigation.

For ideas adopted, employees

received \$2,575 in awards, for suggested ways and means that are saving an estimated \$8,561 annually.

From the eligible 1127 persons at the plant, the monthly goal is 117 suggestions submitted. E. W. Passmore, safety engineer and chairman of the Suggestion Com-

mittee, says it figures out to 1.8 suggestions per employee during the year. Have you turned in yours? Passmore offers these 'suggestion starters':

Look around you. Observe. Compare. Think things out. Then on paper, suggest how to . . .

Reduce costs by cutting down on waste-time and materials.

Improve safety devices and programs. Eliminate unnecessary steps in production.

Simplify handling of paperwork and routine reports.

Combine two or more operations to make for efficiency.

Improve the quality and serviceability of our product.

Increase the value of our goods and services.

Promote our company name, our products and our services.

## Savings

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heat-reclaiming in fabric-treating units, eliminating electrical-resistance heat, and transferring some production from one treating unit to another that is more efficient.

A Day in May • This dog at the Firestone-Gastonia main gate waited for a human friend who'd gone to the Employment office applying for a job.



## Beginning September Pre-Supervisory Training

A pre-supervisory educational program will be offered at Firestone-Gastonia beginning in September. The program, intended to prepare for possible needs for qualified first-level supervisory personnel, is offered to employees who aspire to supervisory positions.

Participation in the program is voluntary, and those who are selected for the training will attend on their off-job time.

"Those applying should have experience in production or service areas that would provide a base for the training," said Clifton O. Logsdon, labor relations assistant, and coordinator of the program. He said that employees who express interest in being considered for the

training will be selected through an intensive process which includes an examination of work experience and personal interviews.

The training will provide a broad exposure to supervisory responsibilities, leadership and communication skills, industrial relations and employee relations practices.

"Taking the training does not guarantee promotion," said Logsdon, "but it will give the successful graduate a consideration for advancement to supervisory positions when promotional opportunities arise."

Interested? See the Gastonia Personnel department for more information and an application form.

## Let's go to the Croaker festival

••The Pirate Invasion at Beaufort, June 27; and Singing on the Mountain, Linville, 28, are among the many North Carolina special events in June and early July. A few more (June)—

Rhododendron Festival, Bakersville, 17-20; Spring Fling, Franklin, 19; Fiddlers Convention & Buckdance, Lincolnton (Pumpkin Center), 27; State Singing Convention, Benson, 27-28; Blue Ridge Mountain Fair, Sparta, 29-July 4.

Early July: Threshers Reunion, Denton, 3-4; Croaker Festival, Oriental, 3-5; Fourth of July celebrations at Eden, Cary, Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Belhaven, Henderson, Hillsborough, Clinton, Pinehurst, Hertford, Lillington, New Bern, Morganton, Franklin, Wilmington, Hendersonville, Ellerbe, Elizabeth City, Clemson, Snow Camp, Winston-Salem, Raleigh.

Some outdoor dramas in season: Legend of Tom Dooley, Wilkesboro, June 21-Aug. 30. Others beginning late June: First For Freedom, Halifax; Blackbeard, Bath; Horn in the West, Boone; Strike at the Wind, Pembroke. Sword of Peace, Snow Camp, July 4-Aug. 30.

Other early July events: Arts By The Sea, Swansboro, 11; Highland Games/Scottish Clans, Linville, 11-12; Guild Fair of Highlands, Asheville, 14-18.

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