

Gov. Martin Says:

"Share The Pride" Conference Affords Unique Opportunities

Editor's Note: This is Governor Martin's monthly column. This column deals with the Administration's commitment to traditional industry and the recent Governor's Conference on Share the Pride - an effort to encourage buying North Carolina-made and American-made products.

When I met in Greensboro recently with leaders of North Carolina's traditional industries to discuss their future, my administration signaled an initiative that will become one of our hallmarks: Our willingness to support and to strengthen the industries that, through the centuries, have become the economic backbone of our state.

We launched this effort early when I appointed Howard Haworth as the secretary of commerce - a businessman whose expertise lies in the arena of traditional industries.

Shortly afterward, I appointed White Watkins of Greensboro as an assistant secretary for traditional industries. The position is an entirely new one for state government. Already Mr. Watkins has demonstrated his value by visiting and talking with business leaders across North Carolina.

Our "Share the Pride" conference in Greensboro afforded a unique opportunity. We mounted our "advertising" campaign to reassure industry leaders, their supporters and their workers that this administration will give them its full attention. I plan to become North Carolina's top salesman for traditional industries. I have already carried that theme to Kannapolis, Oxford, Greenville. I will repeat in many other towns and cities across North Carolina.

Through the workshops and seminars of that conference, top-flight leaders of the industry had an opportunity to share their expertise. This sharing of ideas and problems will have the positive result of looking for long-term solutions that have mounted through the years.

Our problems are not poor management or low productivity. In fact, productivity is up. Output per worker in the textile industry has increased more than 50 percent since 1968. The industry has invested more than a half billion dollars in plant modernization.

Instead, our problems stem from a simple but dangerous trade imbalance. We can compete successfully with anyone in a system of mutual, balanced trade. Unfortunately, we don't get that chance.

Many foreign countries subsidize their manufacturers and producers. The government provides them with raw materials or services at deeply reduced prices.

Another factor is the very low wage rates in less developed countries. One study last year found that the average worker in U.S. labor-intensive industries earns \$8.60 per hour. But their counterparts in South Korea averaged \$1.30 per hour. In Hong Kong, the

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Speaking Out!



Governor Jim Martin
Explores business problems

average hourly wage is \$1.65. Taiwan, \$1.64. China, 26 cents. Here in the United States, our workers perform work of much higher quality and, therefore, deserve and get better wages.

In addition, trade with our foreign neighbors isn't all that free. Under the general agreements on tariffs and trade (GATT), all nations select key industries for protection. Most, for example, protect important agricultural sectors.

Canada restricts imports of leather goods and upholstered furniture. Austria restricts dresses; France blocks electronic products. We all know that Japan has found all sorts of reasons to keep out made-in-America goods. Through it all, we have clung to a belief in the free trade myth - even as evidence mounts that ours is one of the very few open markets left.

Apparel imports have risen dramatically faster than officially allowed by quotas that are voluntary. That's because we don't

enforce them, but rely on a sort of "honor system." Now, Congress is looking at ways to eliminate this problem.

While Congress searches for solutions, we must begin to find our own methods for success. We will start with the "Share the Pride" conference in Greensboro. We will continue to insist on quality products from our North Carolina manufacturers. As much as anything else, our quality is our selling point. No foreign country - and very few states - can match our quality in textiles, in furniture, in shoes and other products.

When I went to the National Governors Conference in Boise last month, one of the Premiers of the Canadian provinces asked why we were able to sell so much furniture in Canada even with their high tariff and the adverse strength of the U.S. dollar.

My answer was simple and to the point: I suggested that one of the many strengths of character of the Canadian people was their appreciation for the

high quality of North Carolina craftsmanship!

Indeed, our quality - and our salesmanship - will be significant parts of our effort to turn around the problems troubling our traditional industries.

I have taken one more important step in this effort. When President Reagan visited North Carolina State University early last month, I was able to talk to him about our problems. He is aware of our needs. After our brief meeting, I feel confident that our textile leaders will be able to meet with key White House officials to discuss solutions.

With your support and your commitment to buy "American-made" and "North Carolina-made" products, the future of our traditional industries can and will be bright. Carry the message to your neighbors: Now is the time to "Share the Pride!"

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