

Colliery, at Shaw, both on the north side of Oldham and, on the south westerly side of the town, Moston Colliery in north Manchester. Enough coal was produced at these collieries to meet the Company's needs and thus maintain its policy of self-sufficiency in all manner of supplies. A considerable proportion of the coal mined at the Jubilee Colliery was converted into coke for use in the blast furnaces in the forge, at Werneth, and in the cupolas in the foundaries at both Hartford and East Works. The coking ovens were charged directly from the pit tubs which were brought into the required position on narrow gauge railway tracks extending above the ovens. The coal and coke produced at the Jubilee Colliery were loaded into the Company's private owner waggons, drawn-up in the colliery's sidings, and the coal from the Butterworth Hall Colliery, which had been carted to sidings at Milnrow, to be loaded into more private owner waggons, were all dispatched to the two works by the Oldham to Rochdale main railway line which passed beside the Jubilee Colliery. To handle the traffic Platt Brothers generated on this line, the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company issued, above normal, directions, to its staff, regarding the availability of locomotives. The sidings at Moston Colliery were connected to the Works by that section of the railway which had been the original line into Oldham. Platt Brothers' private owner waggons, for minerals, were painted blue, with the lettering in white, whereas, to contrast, general goods waggons were painted red-oxide with the white lettering retained. In 1909, Oldham Corporation, as part of its quest for additional sources of the town's water supply, was granted Parliamentary sanction to take water from Butterworth Hall Colliery where disused workings were flooding and having to be pumped out by Platt Brothers. This arrangement remained in force for twenty years until mining ceased completely and the Corporation acquired outright the colliery and its pumping station. However, the acquisition agreement pertaining to Butterworth Hall Colliery carried the proviso that Oldham Corporation had to keep the Jubilee Colliery free of water so long as Platt Brothers continued to work that colliery. This arrangement remained effective until 1932 when mining at Jubilee Colliery was abandoned and, thereafter, the Corporation continued to take water from the flooded workings in that colliery to maintain the level in its Piethorne Reservoir above Ogden. Platt Brothers was still operating Moston Colliery when the country's coal mines were nationalised, by the Labour government which took office in 1945, and thus it passed into the hands of the National Coal Board. The manager, though, elected to remain in the employ of the Company, in a different capacity, rather than join the NCB. Moston Colliery had supported a famed brass band which, in addition to its many public engagements,

including wireless broadcasts, gave occasional concerts, normally in the lunch hour, in the huge dining hall at Hartford Works.

Notwithstanding the tremendous scale its business had reached Platt Brothers never rested on its laurels and never neglected to improve and develop the various models of its product machines nor to add new types of machine to its range of product machines when a market for them was apparent. It had preserved the dynamic approach John Platt had set in the eighteen-fifties, which had put the Company in a class apart from its competitors, namely, to be a truly comprehensive supplier of machinery, of the highest quality, to the textile industry. Two entirely new models of the Mule were introduced, in 1886 and 1900, which kept the Platt Brothers machine superior in productivity; it ran faster and could be made in longer lengths (up to a maximum of 1274 spindles). Nevertheless, a cloud had gathered on the Mule's horizon in the guise of the ring spinning system which had originated in the USA. This system was fast taking hold and two of Platt Brothers' Lancashire competitors, Howard & Bullough, at Accrington, and Tweedales & Smalley, at Rochdale, neither of which concerns had been serious Mule makers, were exploiting it to good effect. Platt Brothers quickly countered with a ring spinning machine (Ringframe) of its own. Progressively, thereafter, the proportion of Ringframes manufactured increased until shortly after the first world war, the Ringframe became the paramount form of spinning machine. The last new mill Platt Brothers was to equip with Mules was the Elk Mill at Oldham, in 1927, by then much against the general trend. The move from Mule spinning to Ringframe spinning, which occurred first in the cotton industry, extended to the woollen, worsted and waste industries though at a slower rate. The preference for the Ringframe arose, first in new markets overseas and, once it had been developed to spin a yarn of a quality comparable with the Mule, universally because its rate of production, per unit area, is higher than that of the Mule and it can be attended by less skilled labour. The Company added to its range of products the complement of machines necessary to manufacture cotton yarns of a very high class, i.e. extremely strong, very regular in thickness and possessing a lustrous sheen, especially those to be woven into cloths for making-up top quality dress apparel for which sophisticated tastes now existed. These machines constituted the "combing" process, which had been perfected by Heilmann, in which the combing machine (Comber) extracted short and immature fibres and minute impurities from the cotton, presented in the form of a sheet (lap), which had been prepared on special machinery – Silver Lap Machine and Ribbon Lap Machine. When utilised, the process was introduced between the Card and the Drawframe. In 1878 Platt