

continuous filament yarn would make considerable inroads into the cloth market. Although the Company was not immediately affected, no longer being a maker of looms, it considered the demand for spun yarn could diminish with the consequent detrimental effect on its mainstream spinning machinery business. As a safeguard, the purchase was made of FNF Limited, a maker of warp knitting machines, at Burton-on-Trent. Although the knitting machine made by that company was somewhat obsolescent it did possess a very efficient warp knitting needle manufacturing plant. The needles were a highly consumable item and the replacement business was most lucrative. To avail itself of a modern model of warp knitting machine TMM entered into a licence agreement with the Liba company, of West Germany, to manufacture that company's machine. A new subsidiary company – Platt Knitting Machinery Limited – was set-up in the FNF buildings. After some years it was decided to move that subsidiary, with the exception of the needle plant which, as expected, was profitable, to the Dobson & Barlow Works at Bradley Fold. The prediction which had given rise to the warp knitting venture did not materialise, on the scale which had been expected, and the venture turned out to be rather a white elephant. A similar path was followed when fears arose that the tufting method of making carpets would seriously damage the Axminster trade and, with it, the prospects for the Spool Axminster Loom. The Ellinson tufted carpet machinery making concern, at Blackburn, was bought and named Platt-Ellinson Limited. But the shadow cast by the tufting scare passed over much quicker than the shadow cast by warp knitting and Platt-Ellinson fizzled out as a supreme whiter than white elephant. One venture which did prove rewarding was that concerning the Self-twist (ST) system for forming worsted yarns. The system was an invention of the CSIRO research organisation in Australia. Under agreements concluded with CSIRO and its Australian associate – the Repco Company – the Textile Machinery Division obtained selling rights for the system in the UK home market and a range of markets overseas, the licence to manufacture the current models of the machine in its works in England and sanction for adaptations of the system to be explored and developed by TMM(R).

Whereas, in the early nineteen-sixties the Textile Machinery Division had equipped itself with a very competitive line of product machines towards the end of the decade those machines had or were being matched, and in some instances surpassed even, by new models of machines issuing from the competitors, especially from those companies which did not make actual spinning machines, i.e. were specialists in making Blowroom and carding machines. This situation had arisen, primarily, from the amount of the experimental and design resources

which had had to be sunk into developing the open-end system of spinning. This system uses a concept of yarn formation, which radically deviates from the conventional spinning system, in that the strand of fibres, on entering the spinning machine, is broken down to the individual fibres it contains to be re-formed as the yarn on the inside wall of a fast rotating cup like device (rotor). The form of package into which the yarn is wound is equivalent to that produced on the Winding Machine and an entire process is eliminated, a pressing incentive. Open-end spinning, or Break spinning as it was called originally, was not a new concept, it was one which had lain dormant for many years and on which the original patents had expired. In the mid nineteen-sixties it had been revived in Czechoslovakia and the progress achieved by the Czechs was showing every possibility of commercial success. This trend induced consternation, not only at Stone-Platt, but at the headquarters of other makers of spinning machines in the western world and a desperate race was on to avoid being left out. Efforts were forced to be heightened when the Czechs revealed the first commercial embodiment of the concept to coincide with the ITMA Exhibition held at Basle in 1967. In order to ease the heavy demands which open-end spinning was imposing upon it, TMM entered into a consortium agreement with two leading makers of spinning machines, one in Switzerland and one in West Germany, which were likewise afflicted, under which the three companies would pool their technological know-how and collectively protect their patent properties pertinent to open-end spinning. Notwithstanding the pressure imposed by the open-end spinning programme, after 1967, a new wave of development work was put in hand on the traditional range of cotton spinning machinery. The next ITMA Exhibition was due in 1971, at Paris.

Organisational changes were made throughout the nineteen-sixties. The Tweedales & Smalley operations were closed down and the buildings were sold. Apart from some of the Blowroom machines, the manufacture of which was transferred to Howard & Bullough, the line of cotton spinning machinery made by Tweedales & Smalley was dropped. It had always been a duplicate of the line sold through Platt Brothers (Sales) and after T&S had become a wholly owned subsidiary of TMM was in contradiction of the basic policy applying to the allocation of the types of machine to the Operating Companies. The disused Platt Brothers spindle works, which it has been seen stood on the corner of Featherstall and Railway Roads, was demolished in 1964 and on its site an ultra-modern style office building, set in gardens, was erected to replace Platt Brothers (Sales) original offices which had been in the Oxford Mill. Yet, within three years the new building was sold back to the builders and Platt Brothers (Sales) was moved to the Howard &