

the formulation of responses to proposed health and safety legislation, which, increasingly, was emanating from the European Commission, in Brussels, and the organisation of the ITMA and like exhibitions. Such matters were transacted through the British Textile Machinery Association (BTMA) of which association Platt International's forerunners had been individual members since its inception in 1940.

In the early nineteen-seventies the fruits from the development work which had been put in train, after 1967, had become available. A cotton Card with novel features, a semi-automated Comber and the first models of the Open-end Spinning Machine had been ready for demonstration at the ITMA Exhibition, at Paris, along with other types of machine, of an older vintage, which had been upgraded. Unhappily the Rovingframe (the Speedframe into which the rest of the series had now been telescoped), despite the upgrading work, had fallen irrevocably behind the models the competition was offering. In an attempt to overtake the competition, in one revolutionary step, much effort and investment were devoted to a project which intended to adopt the 'ST' principle for the production of rovings, for both the cotton and the worsted systems, but the results proved disappointing and the project had to be written off. The competitor generally acknowledged to be offering the most advanced Rovingframe was the American company Saco-Lowell Corporation. This company, too, was one of those which now had on offer Drawframes and a cotton Ringframe superior to the Platt models. Also included in its range of product machines were an up-to-date Ring Doubling Machine and a Ring Twister. Platt had virtually fallen from the Doubler and Twister market due to the antiquity of the design and specification of its machines for that section of the textile trade. When the Maremont Corporation, of Chicago, the parent company of Saco-Lowell, made known it was interested in finding a buyer for its subsidiary company, which as a maker of certain types of cotton textile machinery was quite out of line with Maremont's mainstream business (automotive parts and equipment), Stone-Platt entered into negotiation which culminated, in July 1973, in Saco-Lowell becoming a Stone-Platt property, pursuant to which the President of Saco-Lowell was invited to join the Board of Directors of Stone-Platt. Although Stone-Platt was to own Saco-Lowell through Stone-Platt Corporation of America, a subsidiary of Stone-Platt's direct subsidiary Stone-Platt Overseas Holdings Limited, the practical operations of Saco-Lowell were merged with those of Platt International to form an expanded textile machinery division of Stone-Platt. In order for the two constituent companies of the Division to work under a common name Platt International Limited changed its name to Platt Saco Lowell Limited and Saco-Lowell Corporation changed its name to Platt Saco Lowell Corpo-

ration. Stone-Platt heralded its acquisition of Saco-Lowell as an event which not only marked the threshold of a promising new era for itself but also as an event which (sic) would prove to be of great benefit to the textile industry.

The company which had become Platt Saco Lowell Corporation had a history dating back to 1813. In that year Francis Cabot Lowell, a young engineer who had been working at the Boston Manufacturing Company, in Waltham, Massachusetts, joined the Waltham Mill to construct cotton spinning machinery for use in that mill; in those days, in the USA, it was the practice for much of the machinery to be constructed by the mills themselves. After some years, when it had been recognised that the Lowell made machines were of a high order, other mills sought a supply from Waltham and so successful did the machinery making business of Waltham Mill become it was separated from the mill business and created a business in its own right which was called Lowell Machine Shops. The business flourished right up to the end of the nineteenth century, particularly in the boom which followed the American Civil War. Yet after the zenith of its success, in the period from 1880 to 1897, its fortunes declined so rapidly that in 1905 it was on the verge of collapse brought about by sheer laziness in the market place. The salvation was rendered from mergers with other engineering concerns, the joint one, in 1912, with the two companies Saco and Pettee Machine Shops, being the foundation from which the company Saco-Lowell Corporation was to grow. Thereafter, the Company's fortunes followed a path very similar to those which its counterparts in England had experienced: a boom period after the first world war, low fortunes from the mid nineteen-twenties until a slow revival of business from the mid nineteen-thirties to the second world war. In the years following that war the American cotton mills started the migration from New England to the Southern States and Saco Lowell followed. In 1948 a works was put into operation at Sanford, North Carolina, and in 1957, by which time a second works was operating at Jonesboro, North Carolina. Saco-Lowell commissioned a brand new works, at Easley, South Carolina, which provided a floor area of 500 000 square feet. The Research Center (similar in function to the Platt establishment at Helmsshore) was opened, in 1959, at Clemson, South Carolina, but, in 1970, the Center was closed and its activities transferred to the main works at Easley. It was in 1960 that the Maremont Corporation had secured its interest in Saco-Lowell. In Spain, an old established firm of cotton spinning machinery makers, Serra S.A., had been acquired by Saco-Lowell for the purpose of manufacturing and selling its own product machines in Europe. This firm was located at Manlleu, some forty miles north of Barcelona. After Saco-Lowell had passed into the hands of Stone-Platt