

"Our Business" Series

HILL PAUL & Co. Ltd.

Wholesale Clothiers

★ Introducing "Flow-line production"

★ "An Eye-sore" or "a Monument"?

SINCE the end of the war, Hill Paul's, in common with other manufacturers have faced a severe labour problem.

With a staff reduced to 50 per cent below pre-war strength, normal losses and the time necessary to train workers in the traditional tailoring methods has resulted in diminishing output and increasing costs.

To deal with this situation, a bold plan of re-organisation, incorporating the most modern clothing engineering assembly methods has been introduced. Staff can now be trained quickly to become expert in clearly defined operations.

"Flow-line production," as it is called, has been achieved by

the introduction of a "design for production" department which corresponds to the engineer's drawing office and toolroom. The line might be described as a conveyor belt system without the conveyor belts.

Operations are divided into periods of approximately seven minutes or multiples of seven to maintain a steady flow. The parts of each garment are put into a separate tray which is passed from one operation to the next, along a table. If the trays begin to pile up, the supervisor can see the bottleneck immediately and take action.

Production is already higher

than last year, with further expansion in view.

DEALT EXCLUSIVELY

Since their formation, just over 50 years ago, Hill Paul have dealt exclusively in the making-up of youths' and men's outer wear; suits, sports coats and trousers. But over the years their type of trade has risen from the lower quality to the better. Although none of their goods are exported, their "Cotswold" trade mark is known in all parts of the country.

One major advantage of being in the men's clothing trade, rather than the women's, is the absence of constant fashion changes. There are, of course, fashion trends, even in men's clothing, but they are slow and fairly sure.

At the moment many men's jackets are being fitted with two buttons instead of the usual three. Lapel shapes are changing and trousers are becoming narrower. Also for leisure wear, patterns are becoming slightly gayer. Hill Paul do not, of course, make any cloth themselves, and most of what they use comes from Yorkshire, but last year, for the first time, cloth from Marling and Evans was used, with great success.

The six-storey high square shaped factory of Hill Paul is certainly a Stroud landmark, and one of the tallest buildings in the county. It has been variously described as "an eyesore" and "a monument."

The factory was built in 1899 by Williamson Tratt and Co. Ltd., but three years later they went bankrupt. Out of the remains of this company a new enterprise was produced by Mr. William Henry Paul and Mr. R. M. Hill, who went into partnership as Hill Paul and Co. Ltd.

In 1909 Mr. Hill left the business and it was from then on a family concern of Mr. W. H. Paul and his three sons, Mr. J. T. Paul, Mr. W. L. Paul, and Mr. H. A. Paul. After Mr. W. H. Paul's retirement in 1921 the business was run by his three sons until the 1st of January, 1949, when it became a private limited company. Since then Mr. J. T. Paul has retired from active business. In 1947, Mr. W. G. Paul, son of Mr. W. L. Paul, joined the company; it marked the third generation of the Paul family in the business.

The present directors are: Mr. J. T. Paul, Mr. W. L. Paul, Mr. H. A. Paul, Mr. W. G. Paul, and Mr. W. A. Critchley. The company remains, as always, a quite independent concern.

CRAFTSMANSHIP STILL IMPORTANT

Although machines now do much of the traditional skills, craftsmanship is still important, and as much traditional hand work as ever is needed for the type of trade being done.

Among the 130 employees, those with the longest service to the company are: Mr. A. Davis, of Stroud, head cutter; Mr. F. W. Smith, of Stroud, materials and production planning; Miss A. Cull, of Stroud, coat machinist; and Miss M. Rogers, of Selsley, trouser room, forewoman.

What of the future? Even though the factory is now built round, this is unlikely to affect future development, for output can be very considerably increased within the present space.

You are cordially invited to our

NORVIC FOOTFITTING

WEEK

Tuesday 26th March, to Saturday 30th March

22. 3. 57.

MR. LAWRENCE JUDD, the fitting expert from the NORVIC SHOE CO., LTD., will be in attendance. If you have difficulty in buying really elegant shoes that fit well, here is the opportunity for you to try—

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