

But, just as happened a year ago, up to the moment of going to press with this pre-market issue of FCW, the supply of information from manufacturers is quite meager, to say the least.

When we ask "Why?" the usual answer is that most mills don't know until the last minute exactly WHICH new fabrics they actually want to introduce or are READY to introduce, at the Chicago market, and thus cannot provide us with any concrete information in time to make our issue a week before the market.

Retailers attending the markets can be certain of one thing: when a salesman shows them something new, his sales pitch will quickly identify the fiber, and like it or not, fiber is the name of the carpet game today and probably will be for a long time to come. Retailers won't have to ask "What's it made of?" That will come almost automatically.

Did we hear that there's a "move" afoot by manufacturers to stop using the widely advertised and promoted trade names of fiber producers on the labels of their carpet and replace same with their own, such as "Barwick approved acrylic" or "Bigelow approved nylon" and so on? Yes, we did, in several quarters. Is this a good idea? Perhaps not. Fiber producers have a tremendous stake in the carpet industry and taken together with their own advertising had coupled with co-op advertising allowances to manufacturers as well as retailers, they still outspend carpet manufacturers for advertising by some pretty tremendous odds and probably do more to make America carpet conscious than anything carpet manufacturers ever did on their own.

These are simple basic truths and some of this malarkey about giving the carpet industry back to carpet manufacturers is plain cockeyed nonsense. Sure, tufting was greatly responsible for seeing the carpet industry zoom to record-breaking heights both in production and sales, but it was the fiber producers who did practically the total job in telling Mr. and Mrs. America that there WAS such a thing as tufted carpet, regardless of whose fiber that carpet happened to be made of.

Let's face it: when in the memory of the oldest oldtimer in the carpet business did anyone ever see the Wool people advertise wool carpet? And it so happens that the wool people will be around at the Summer markets making some noise about all the new fabrics that will be shown made of Wool.

Funny thought: are there any manufacturers around who are going to use their own label saying "... approved WOOL"?

Item: at this stage of the game there is hardly a manufacturer left who hasn't gone into the so-called indoor-outdoor business with a carpet or carpets that supposedly can "take it" when it comes to rain and snow and hail and soot and dirt and everything else you have to contend with outdoors. The fact is that even some manufacturers who labeled indoor-outdoor carpet as little more than a "gimmick" had to move in to this business once they began being "impressed" with sales figures. Be that as it may, it could be that this indoor-outdoor or inside-outside carpet IS a gimmick because when it comes to the outdoors, an awful fraction of all this carpet actually DOES go outdoors, which only goes to prove something, and that something is that such a thing as carpet doesn't have the "guts" to stand up with any degree of longevity in fighting the elements.

Item: Kitchen carpets. Is there a manufacturer in the house who hasn't gotten on this bandwagon? No question about it but Jim Marcus and his Viking Carpets really got something started in THIS department. But what with all the competition Viking has created for itself, it continues to get the fattest slice of this kitchen business—or what there IS of it—if only by virtue of its hard-hitting and consistent program of advertising, merchandising and promotion. As yet no other manufacturer of kitchen carpet has come close in matching Viking in these departments. But the tough baby in this kitchen carpet business is Mrs. Housewife, most of whom will look at you like a nut when you mention putting carpet in her kitchen. This is one area where the lady really has to be given a high-pressure sales pitch. The soft-sell just won't do it in convincing Mrs. Housewife that carpet belongs in her kitchen.

Item: Contract carpet. Best labeled as commercial carpet. What is it? ANY carpet sold and installed for other than residential use. Just as simple as that. Many commercial jobs call for carpet specifications. An expert in commercial carpet—Sid Schwartz of Trend Mills—recently gave out with some pretty strong language—and a virtual condemnation—of the whole area of commercial carpeting so far as specifications are concerned. But that belongs in the technical