

Specialization is not limited to individual establishments or even companies. Similar specialization exists at the retail levels, where buyers tend to specialize in the purchase and handling of a limited line of products. In many cases, specialization is not even as broad as a generic product, but is narrowed further by United States buyers and producers of apparel (knit and woven) who specialize in handling specific ranges of quality or price ranges of a given product. This makes it difficult to switch production, whether it be to the same item in a price range distinctly different from the ones they have been producing, or to entirely different items. The switch involves not only formidable production obstacles, but the need to develop a new network of personal retail relationships because the people with whom they are accustomed to deal are not the ones in the market for the other types of goods.^{3/}

The small size of the average firm in the apparel (knit and woven) industry is related to the industry's relatively simple technology. Most of the machines in actual use are fundamentally mechanized tools, the handling of which can be mastered within a relatively short period of time. The basic piece of equipment is the sewing machine, the design of which has remained substantially unchanged throughout this century. At the same time, the addition of auxiliary equipment and increased subdivision of labor has simplified operations in garment production. The same is true for most other equipment utilized

^{3/}Even the larger apparel companies, which produce and market a wider range of products, tend to have their individual establishments specialize in the production of a single product or a small number of very closely related products, and tend to maintain separate sales organizations to handle the distribution of different products.