

While the State of New Jersey isn't happy to lose any firms, for whatever the reason, it's probably saddest to see J. Wiss & Company move a sizeable part of its operation to Georgia, a relocation affecting more than 700 workers. Part of its Newark facilities and all of the Maplewood operations will be leaving, with the forging and tool and die department (100 or so workers) retained in Newark. Wiss was founded in Newark in 1848 and is one of New Jersey's oldest companies. It was family-owned until its sale in late 1976 to Cooper Industries of Houston, Texas.

According to Paul G. Richards, vice president and general manager of Wiss for Cooper Industries' hand tool group, the consolidation into a larger facility in Georgia will bring Wiss operations into one modern plant. It will permit greater production efficiencies required for profitable competition with domestic and foreign producers of hand cutting tools.

In a *Newark Star-Ledger* interview last February when the relocation was announced, Richards explained that Cooper had requested a study be

made of the relative merits of combining production either in New Jersey or in the Southeast. While the company was the number one name in its field, the pinch was beginning to be felt from the lower priced Japanese and Brazilian imports.

Richards said an internal study of comparative taxes, wage rates and facility costs showed it was more efficient to relocate in the Southeast.

Metal forgings, being retained in Newark because of the difficulty and expense of replacing these highly specialized operations, will be sent South for finishing and assembly. Concluding on a somewhat more optimistic note, Richards added that the remaining Newark operation could expand should sales grow.