

The steel business has changed a lot in the years that Walter Zimmerman has been at Greer Steel. He points to the most recent addition, a 3-strand Waterbury Farrell Wire Mill, just part of the growing investment at the Dover plant.

Greer Meets 'Exacting' Tests

Things said in a joking manner can sometimes "hit the nail on the head." . . . When some unknown soul once said that Dover's Greer Steel Co. was "the Tiffany of the steel business" it made a lot of sense.

It was so descriptive that veteran employe and plant manager, Walter Zimmerman, has made real use of the phrase over the years.

Why does the Tiffany tag seem to stick? Well, the New York jeweler has a reputation for flawless silver and jewels. The firm doesn't sell everyone but those who seek perfection out of the realm of mass production can often find it there.

And so it is with Greer, a well-known employer of several hundred local men whose knack for exacting specifications and brilliantly finished steel has set it apart in a field of 50 major competitors in this country and no small number abroad.

Tonage in steel business is a usual measurement among producers. For Greer it's important too, but, by many standards, the 60,000 tons of cold roll strip that runs through the rolling, slitting annealing and processing machines in Dover is an almost insignificant amount.

The cold-rolled steel that is a raw material for Greer and all of its competitors amounts to scarcely 1 per cent of the total steel produced in the U.S. Of this 1 per cent Greer runs only 5 per cent through its mill. They are, therefore, involved with about 1-20th of 1 per cent of the entire steel production of this country.

Small? They are and yet the industrial giants that daily use Greer steel form a list of many of America's most famous names.

Eastman Kodak, Tappan Stove, General Electric Appliances, Dominion Appliances, IBM, General Motors and every other automobile manufacturers are Greer customers.

Each one of these and dozens of other names that are household words in this country all find the sparkling finish of Greer Steel just what they want.

This processing of steel with such a mirror-like finish that at first glance it appears chrome plated is no small achievement.

The answer comes deliberately from Zimmerman, a man who came to work for the firm in 1929 as an office boy and now knows every inch of the plant and every man who makes it run.

"The Greer finish is superior because a lot of us work to make it that way . . . all of us you might say," Zimmerman said proudly. It's a team effort and no one can point to one man of the group of men who are solely responsible."

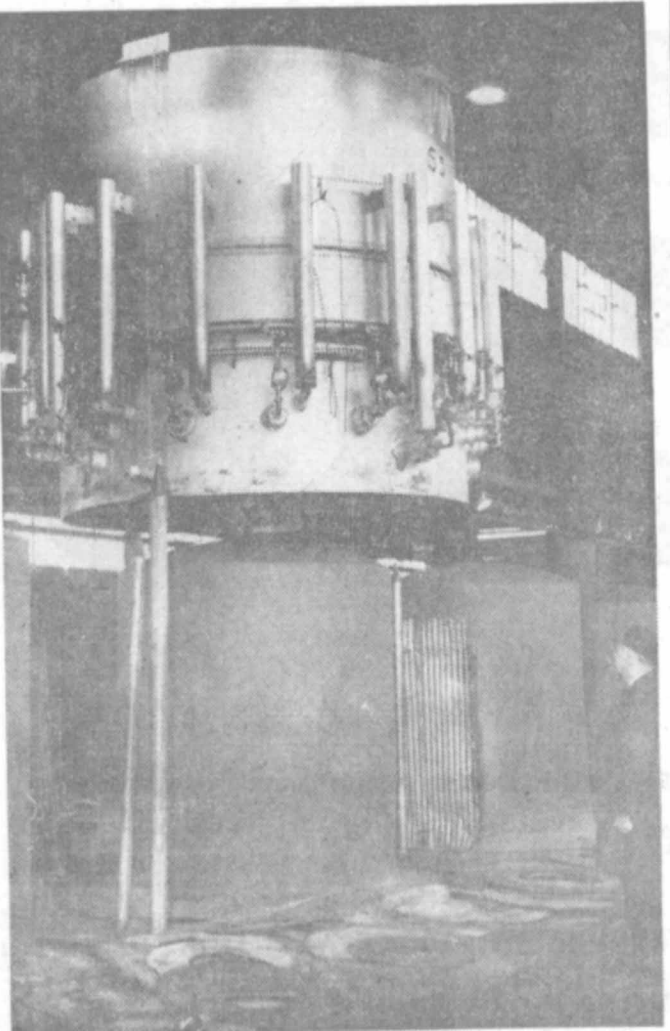
There was no noticeable pause as he said, "Between one quarter and one half million dollars have been spent each year for a number of years just to keep abreast of the market. Some of our competitors have failed in recent years because they haven't kept pace."

As profits for firms like Greer become tighter, sales volume must go up and it has. Additions like the new annealing line and others in the planning stage become expensive and important projects.

The only place the Tiffany analogy falls apart is when you talk about price. Tiffany can command fancy prices for his articles of perfection. A steel company must meet exacting specifications within the competitive price structure.

The high quality, of course, pays off because of customer preference for a better looking, better performing steel.

As he passed by hundreds of tons of glinting steel coils in



Greer Steel's heating of steel coils is finished and a giant furnace is lifted from the coils as Walter Zimmerman, general manager completes one of his almost daily plant tours.