La. Has World’s Largest Anhydrous Ammonia Plant

Olin Mathieson Facility Opened in Lake Charles

Governor Gives Principal Dedication Speech

LAKE CHARLES, La. — Olin Mathieson Chemical Corp. dedicated the world’s largest anhydrous ammonia plant here Tuesday and officials said it will make Southwest Louisiana the ammonia and fertilizer capital of the world.

Gov. John McKeithen was principal speaker at ceremonies opening the $19 million facility.

In welcoming the new industry, Gov. McKeithen said, “Louisiana has quit bragging of its glorious past, has gotten out from under the shade of the Magnolia trees and cast aside its mint juleps. While we were bragging about the reputation our ancestors made on the battlefields of Virginia, the rest of the states of the nation were walking off and leaving us.”

He said Louisiana has come a long way, but still has a long way to go. In the last 11 months, the governor said, Louisiana has demonstrated it is not satisfied in being last.

McKeithen said personal income in the state has increased more than any other state of the Union, more than 50 per cent above the national average.

He said the people wanted to see industry come to Louisiana and prosper, but there was a selfish motive for getting industry here.

Industry brought about new developments in schools, roads and other fields of activity, he said.

W. B. Copeland, Mathieson agricultural division vice-president and general manager, said the new plant would do its part toward feeding the expanding population of the world. He said the underdeveloped areas of the world would experience a 75 per cent increase in population in the next 20 years. “It will not be long before our government changes from a hold-down food production program to an increase food production program,” he said.

Speculators heard speakers proclaim the plant opening as a giant step forward for both the company and the state.

Gordon Grand, president and chief executive officer of Mathieson, told a dinner gathering the new plant demonstrates the ability of free enterprise to gear up and feed a hungry world.

He noted the firm has more invested in Louisiana than in any other state and said, “We know we made the right decision when we decided on locating the new plant here.”

Grand said Mathieson was aware of the new industrial climate created in the state by Gov. McKeithen.

He traced the company’s growth since 1954, citing an expansion program which started in 1963. He said the company’s Louisiana payroll now reaches $25 million.

The ammonia to be produced in the new plant is a major ingredient of fertilizer. Capable of producing 1,400 tons of ammonia a day, roughly a ton a minute, the new unit is part of Mathieson’s $45 million expansion in the agricultural field.

GOV. JOHN J. M’KEITHEN (left) talks with ranking officials of the Olin Mathieson Chemical Corp. at Tuesday’s dedication of the company’s new $19 million anhydrous ammonia plant in the Lake Charles Industrial Complex. Gordon Grand (center) is president of the company, and Charles Smith (right) is executive vice-president.