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UPI ARCHIVES FEB. 23, 1984

# Vermont's only clothespin manufacturer is relying on a resurgence...

By KEVIN GODDARD



MONTPELIER, Vt. -- Vermont's only clothespin manufacturer is relying on a resurgence of Americanism to keep it in business following an International Trade Commission decision lifting import quotas on inexpensive foreign products, the Montpelier company said today.

Janet Merrill, treasurer of the National Clothes Pin Co. Inc. -- one of only four clothespin manufacturers in the U.S. -- said the company expects a flood of competition from manufacturers in Taiwan and China.

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And, she said the foreign products are likely to be significantly cheaper than the domestic clothespins.

'It's a known fact that they can produce them over there far cheaper than we can,' she said. 'When you pay your workers



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Americanism out there now -- people want to buy American products.'

The company and its three domestic counterparts -- all of which are located in western Maine -- have fought for years to preserve the import quotas, which restrict the amount of foreign competition on the U.S. clothespin market.

The ITC first imposed the temporary quotas in 1979, hoping to give U.S. manufacturers a three-year opportunity to modernize their production techniques and gird themselves for the eventual competition from Taiwan, Poland, China and West Germany.

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In 1982, largely at the request of domestic manufacturers, the quota was extended for another two years.

Ms. Merrill said the Montpelier company was convinced at the time that no further extensions would be granted. And, she said that conviction was confirmed when the ITC lifted the quotas earlier this week.

'We knew it was coming,' she said.

National Clothes Pin produces about 750,000 wooden, pinch clothespins each week, with a workforce ranging from 18-22.

Altogether, the U.S. industry employs about 300, and churns out 6 million gross of clothespins each year.

Ms. Merrill said she expects the foreign-made products to surface on the U.S. market within weeks.

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