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Berlin: German import fair 1968

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COMMENTS

Berlin

German Import Fair 1968

From September 26th until October 6th the sixth import fair will be held in Berlin under the title "Partners of Progress". Apart from government exhibitors from the developing countries, private producers and exporters are this year going to be particularly strongly represented. From Hong-Kong alone 40 firms are expected, from the Far East 100 and from South America 60. These strong contingents of private enterprises from the developing countries are proof of their having realised the need for efforts on their part to increase their exports. They are anxious to establish contacts with potential trading partners, to get to know their special wishes, to hear their suggestions and, if possible, to do business.

These endeavours should be supported by positive measures. For it is not enough to encourage exports from developing countries by such means as preferential tariffs and raw-material agreements. Equally important is to arouse the interest of the individual firms in a developing country and make them want to export their products to industrial countries. One effective way of helping them is to discover new products that are suitable for industrial countries and to exhibit these products. A next step would be to get German trading partners with efficient marketing organisations to open up markets for such imports. If by such means firms in the developing countries can be made to intensify their efforts in the export market and if German trading partners can be persuaded to increase their imports from these countries, then the "Partners for Progress" Fair will indeed assume growing importance as vital link between developing and industrial countries. sc.

Iran

Praiseworthy Reform Programme

On January 26, 1963, the reform programme of the Shah was submitted to the people of Iran in a referendum and adopted. This made it possible to take the first steps towards a reform of the country's economic and social structure. The main features of the programme are: land-reform, education, equal rights and the vote for women, the sale of state-owned factories to private enterprise, participation of the workers in the profits of industry as well as the creation of two special corps—one charged with agricultural development and the other with health. The most prominent feature is without a doubt the land-reform, which provides for the sharing out of crown-land and the creation of cooperatives. The

authority concerned with the land-reform has bought up the land and has resold it to its erstwhile tenants. In this way some 69,000 villages have since 1963 come into possession of roughly 3 million rural families, and by the time the programme has been completed there should be at least 150,000 cooperatives assisting farmers and tenants in introducing modern methods of cultivation.

Iran is predominantly a farming country, and it is not intended to change this overnight. One is well aware of the fact that industrialisation must be preceded by a thorough retraining of the population. To prepare the ground for ultimate industrialisation a special organisation has therefore been set up, charged with education, health and development. Apart from this, former land-owners who receive compensation from the Government are given the possibility of participating in industrialisation schemes or in mechanised farming enterprises.

In view of the highly conservative attitude of the people these are immense tasks. The plan has some defects, but is on the whole exemplary. It is the fruit of mature consideration. The existing problems are being tackled from all sides. Above all, one has avoided to repeat the old error of plunging too eagerly into industrialisation, thereby neglecting agriculture and leaving out of account the mentality of the people and its educational level. rd.

Japan

Anxious Shipbuilders

The old German saying of "trees not growing into the heavens" applies also to the Japanese ship-building industry. Up to now admired by all and sundry, Japanese shipyards are beginning to look into the future with some anxiety. They are still ahead of their strongest rivals, Sweden, the Federal Republic and Great Britain, but there are clouds on the horizon which can hardly be overlooked.

In comparison with its rivals Japan is a late-comer in shipbuilding—a country that came on the scene as exporter of ocean-going merchant vessels after the second world war only. When, after losing the war, Japan was again permitted by the victors to build ships, the Japanese began in 1947 to re-build with state-assistance their own merchant fleet. Then a series of international events such as Korea and the Suez-crisis gave a boost to Japanese shipbuilders who by then were already in a position to accept many orders for which the European capacity was insufficient. In 1967 Japanese shipyards exported ships to