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## German shipbuilding beginning to catch up

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This taking over is done by the purchase of state-guaranteed medium- and long-term suppliers' credit claims by the banks. The Federal Government supports the transfer of these claims into the banks' balance sheets by improving in some items the guarantee given the purchasing bank as compared with that given the selling exporter. For these improvements the exporter assumes, vis-à-vis the Government, the risk-difference, i.e. a liability to recourse. The exporters' chances to sell outright their claims arising from export transaction serves the consolidation of old business activities. This restriction alone shows that this new measure is no export promotion and does not intend to be one. A ceiling of DM 250 mn is provided for this measure which regarding its duration and material content is linked with the Law for Providing Security in External Trade Relations, as passed on November 29, 1968. But the German Government will examine whether the new measure will be maintained beyond March 31, 1970. The regulation has become effective on March 15, 1969.

### **Conception of a German Oil Supply Company**

A decision made by the Federal Government on March 12, 1969, paves the way for the establishing of a German mineral oil supply company. This project derives from the intention

to keep a certain share, or 25 p.c. respectively, of the German mineral oil market in German possession and thus to obstruct a further advance of foreign concerns in this sector. Above all a German owned crude oil basis is to secure the cheapest possible supply. The new company is no government corporation, but without state support it would not work. The decisive move was the Government's resolution on a regular financial support.

The new enterprise will have the firm name of "Deutsche Erdölversorgung-GmbH" and the mineral oil companies still in German possession will be participants in it. If 25 p.c. or more of one of the partner firms becomes the possession of foreigners, it will cease to be a participant. The company's capital stock will amount to DM 50 mn, and it will act in its own name and will, for its own account, open up new mineral oil deposits, acquire already productive fields and buy shares in other crude oil companies. The new enterprise will also conclude long-term supply contracts with other firms and become active also in the field of oil transportation.

To begin with the Government's support will consist of an initial aid. The Federal Government will place DM 575 mn at the new company's disposal within six years. These loans are to be repaid under certain conditions. They are given for

the opening up of new oilfields and are to cover 75 p.c. of the expenditure. They need not be repaid if the new fields are not productive, but even if oil is found, repayment may be waived up to 50 p.c. Over and above this the Federal Government may grant contributions "à fonds perdu" up to 30 p.c. of the price paid for productive oilfields and the purchase of shares in other companies.

### **Voluntary Assistants in Developing Countries**

At present about 1,700 young Germans are working voluntarily as development assistants in Asian, African and Latin American countries. Besides the German Development Service also Church institutions and a number of minor private organisations, that are cooperating within the "Working Group of Private Development Services", have sent development assistants who are decisive for the image of German development aid. The average duration of their employment is two years in the case of the German Development Service and the smaller private organisations, while with the Church institutions it is three years. Altogether 3,476 volunteers have up to now been sent to developing countries to work there for several years.

The German Bundestag has passed a Law pertaining to German development assistants, which regulates and supports this important sector of German development aid. This Law for the first time furnishes a legal basis for the tasks of personnel working for development aid. The draft statute acknowledges the work of the German Development Service and the other organisations as a task whose performance is in the public interest. The core of this Law is an essential improvement of the development assistants' social security. Moreover, this Law establishes the equality of military service or substitute service, respectively, with the development service, and rules that development assistants will be dispensed from military or substitute services.

### **German Shipbuilding Beginning to Catch up**

The Federal Republic's share in international shipbuilding increased to 9.6 p.c. in the first three quarters of 1968, in the third quarter alone to 10.5 p.c. With that Germany surpassed Britain for the first time and holds the second place in world shipbuilding far behind Japan. This development is all the more remarkable as West Germany's share in international shipbuilding had declined to 7.1 p.c. in 1967.