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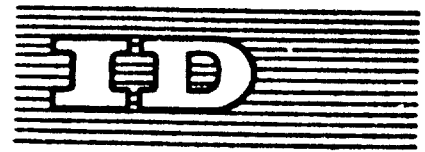
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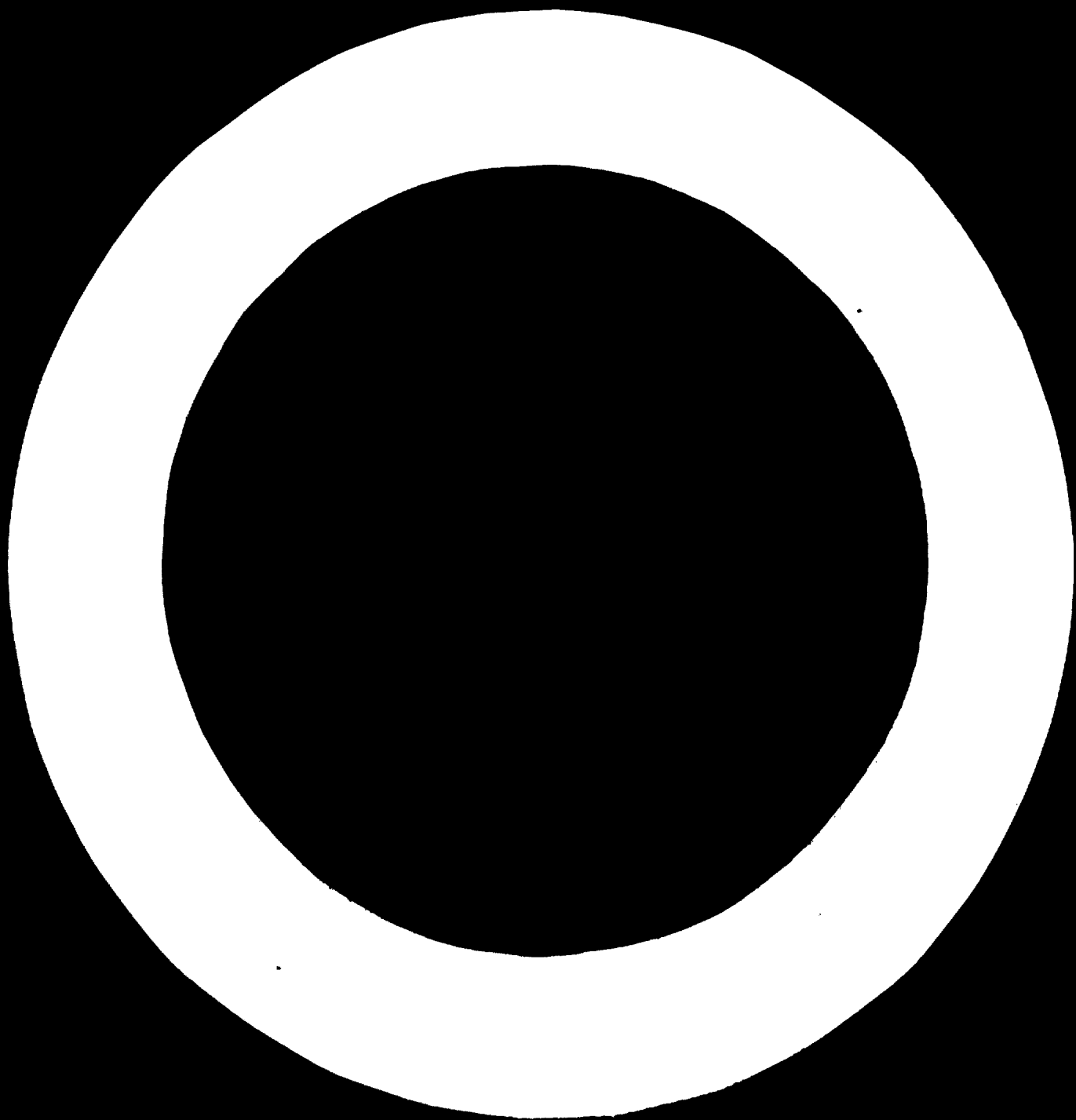
THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY IN
NIGERIA AND ITS FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT^{1/}

Country Paper
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More than a hundred years ago there was little or nothing known as furniture in Nigeria. People lived in tents with one or no windows but with just an entrance known as door which would only be covered at night with hard-back of a tree.

But as years passed by, people began to build houses with mud and the roofing covered with leaves.

In the past forty to fifty years, furniture manufacturing was gradually introduced. During that time only carpenters were known and their trade, carpentry, was given a common term called "Cut and Nail" which means, as it reads, ordinary cutting of timber and nailing, and no serious method was involved. But as time passed by people began to know about cabinet making and these cabinet makers are those generally employed by the Furniture Industry. While ordinary carpentry work involved little or no methods in the past, cabinet making involves many methods and techniques, such as, preparation, joints, making assembly, dressing and finishing. Most of the stages being done by hand in the past is being done by machine nowadays.

As Nigeria is one of the civilised countries, it will be worthwhile to emphasize the problem confronting the furniture industry in Nigeria. It calls for a person or persons who will undergo training on work study. Despite the little improvement in furniture being produced in Nigeria, it still requires a number of experts and trained or qualified persons who can interpret the full meaning of work study to the floor workers in order to reduce a number of operations to a minimum and the time wasted on a piece of job to be limited.

Today, there are many modern buildings designed by expert architects and built by good registered builders, so we have many big industries manufacturing furniture and uncountable local furniture manufacturers. A beautiful well designed building is not complete without furniture, for furniture has no place to live but in a building.

Nowadays, furniture industry is one of the popular trades in Nigeria, it is established all over the country. It is a trade which requires qualified people, skilled craftsmen, machine operators, polishers or spraymen and general labour. It is also a trade which requires suitable equipment and tools. The factory in which furniture is being produced is usually built of concrete on block work in a factory shape as L, H, I, U and etc. The building is designed to have many windows to allow free circulation of fresh air into the building and the natural light and

also have suitable entrance doors.

As far as I know, the establishment of furniture industry in Nigeria is gradually increasing and this gives a chance for employment of indigenous and foreign workers.

All species of timber being used in furniture industry are well seasoned.

In my country, furniture industry companies base their seasoning of timber on the natural seasoning method; the timber is stacked under cover to protect it from the rain, wind and sun.

As a general guide, board inch thick of softwood should take between two and three months and timber two inches thick from three to four months to season. Hardwood, one inch thick or two inches thick should likely take four to six months to season.

Most of furniture being manufactured today are made mainly of furniture grade plywood, exterior grade plywood, striped sapele plywood, mahogany plywood and African walnut plywood, etc. Also timber being used mostly are, Sapele Mahogany, Iroko, Cida, Agba, Black Afara, Abura and many other hardwood for joinery works such as, Opepe, Denta, Guarea, Steculia, Mensonia, etc.

In Nigeria, my company, a foreign firm, Costain (West Africa) Limited, is one of, if not the best Civil Engineering, Building, Furniture and Joinery Manufacturing Industry. There are others like Costain (West Africa) Limited and a lot of indigenous firms or local furniture manufacturers.

Yet my company has the highest reputation for producing first class furniture and its experience in this field is likely in the design and finish of its products. Only selected and seasoned West African timber and top quality plywood are used and in every sequence of production its policy is quality first.

The manufacture of our high standard furniture calls for skilled craftsmen working under expert supervision. In order to maintain this standard it has established in Nigeria over the past 22 years progressive and specialised products in most branches of the Wood Working Industry which includes office partitioning, panelling, prefabricating and finishing.

In Nigeria nowadays, a lot of various types of home furniture and office furniture are being manufactured, such as dining chairs, office chairs, carver chairs, drink stools, occasional tables, carver tables, dressing tables, dressing table stools, bedside tables, bedside cabinets, bookcases, bookshelves

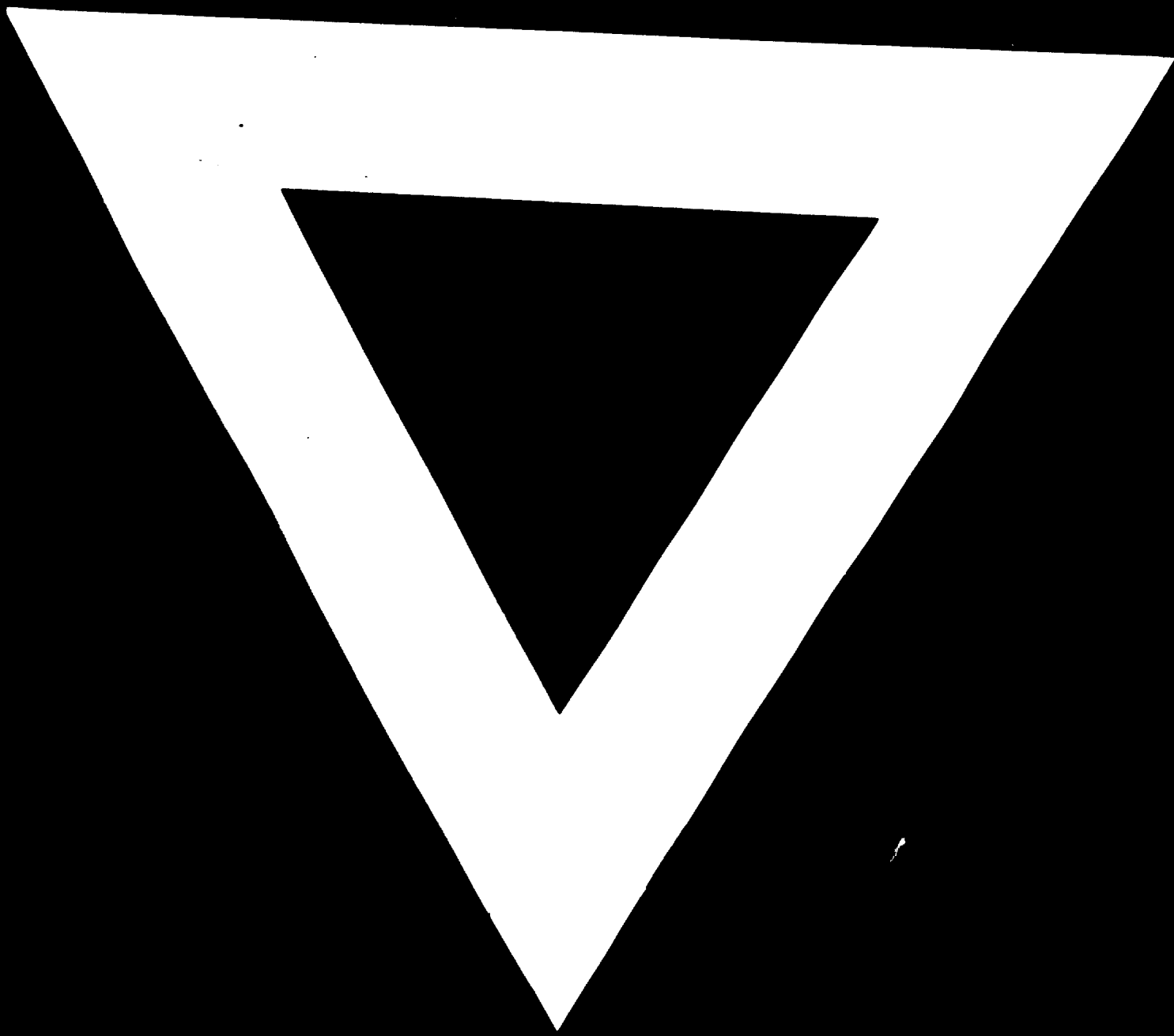
fitments, writing tables, card tables, sideboards, beds, bedroom chairs, unit chairs, typist swivel chairs, executive swivel chairs, typist desks, executive desks, clerks tables, standard desks, chest of drawers, extension tables, baby cots, wardrobes and etc.

As years passed by, we have been able to improve the standard and quality of our furniture, at the same time, economy, durability and profit making is taken into consideration because Nigeria, as a developing country, cost of materials, cost of living, condition of service and civilisation is rising almost every year. It is therefore very necessary to raise, in all aspects, the condition of furniture for better.

In the near future the set of furnitures we manufacture today, be it metal, wood or otherwise will become old in design, and we shall certainly need new ones with new methods and designs to replace them in our markets.

Technically, experts from abroad have been giving us assistance and as there is no end to knowledge and education, we shall continue to need technical assistance, especially in the field of furniture manufacturing trade.





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