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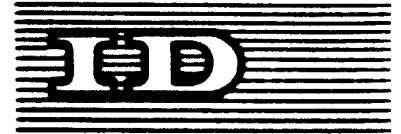
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Seminar on Furniture and Joinery Industries  
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The Furniture Industry in Mexico<sup>1/</sup>

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The wooden furniture industries of Mexico have overcome the past crisis of lack of knowledge and improvisation in the selection of machinery, in the use of raw materials and in the production technology.

Due to the rapid development of Mexico since 1950 (and still even faster in the last decade) the furniture industry as well as the wood processing industry and their subproducts are becoming an important industry and it can no longer be considered the manual carpentry at small shops of the past.

Fast growth, of course, has obliged the industrialists to introduce new production systems which many times resulted in mistakes and problems since they were not ready technologically for those changes.

All these problems have brought extra cost and unbalanced situations, but at the moment we could say the situation of the industry has stabilized and a competitive internal market has developed. Since the main investments of the government are being directed to the housing programmes, educational, and social assistance buildings and all of these programmes require a large amount of furniture as well as items made from wood, the government is also allocating funds to the wood industry to speed its development.

Mass production is necessary to minimize costs, therefore loans for improving layouts and machinery of factories are being given to the industries. These are complemented by loans from the industries directly to their workers (totalling US\$ 15,000,000) to enable them to purchase new furniture for their new homes.

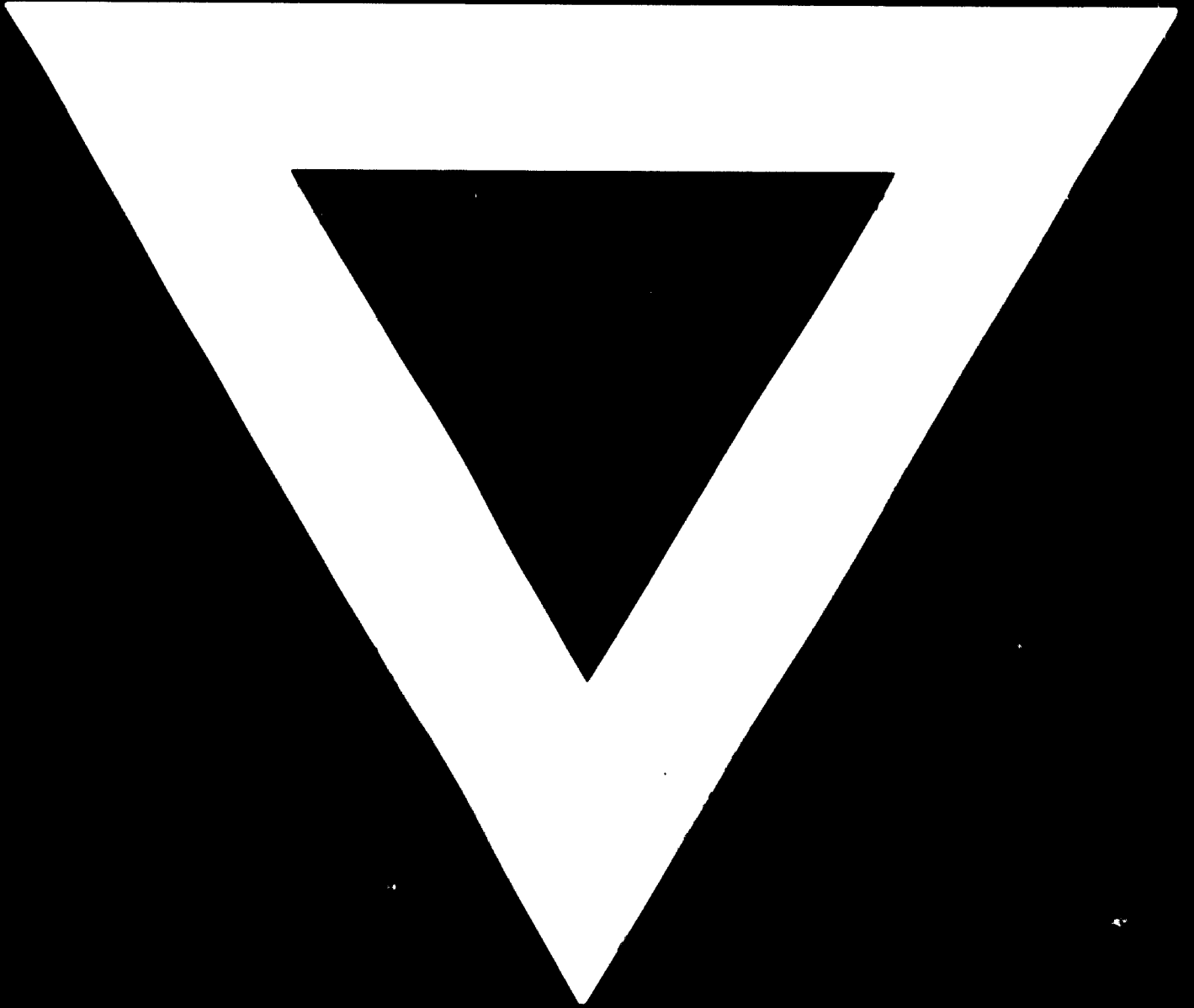
The lack of technological know-how sometimes results in purchasing the wrong machinery or make the unskilled workers commit mistakes that result in extra costs to the industries. All these false steps are being overcome thanks to assuring that the industrial managers obtain appropriate technologies from other countries and do not improvise and "develop" local techniques. This is achieved with the help of government capitals.

Due to the lack of technology we sometimes took much more time to reach the full production, some of our industries may have had to reflect this directly in the cost of their products which make them un-competitive on the foreign markets. All these points lead one to think that some changes should take place in the way Mexican wood industries are being managed; we should dedicate more efforts to educate our workers in specific fields (the Government already has programmes leading to technical degrees). Furthermore our production should be aimed at more normalized (though not yet standardized) products, since at the moment factories do not produce specific products therefore their production do not reach the desired goals

At this moment people in charge specifying products to be manufactured are better informed on what to ask; they no longer request items that are very expensive to produce; while on the other hand industrialists are getting the proper technology. At the present moment Mexico is going through an important economic transition (because of the oil), and industrially speaking, in the whole history of Mexico all Mexicans related to industry should direct all their efforts as to encause our industry into the right channels of development.



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