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Furniture and Joinery Production in the
Forest Industry Corporation
of Sierra Leone^{1/}

by

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Introduction:

The Forest Industries Corporation, a furniture manufacturing factory in Sierra Leone started its activity in 1947, as part of the Forestry Department. The factory is situated in Kenema, a provincial headquarter of the Eastern Province, situated 210 miles from Freetown the capital of Sierra Leone. Other private people are engaged in producing furniture on a smaller scale.

In 1961, the Industry became a separate Government Department and expanded considerably. These included erection of large buildings which in turn were divided in sections, and each section assigned to specific jobs, like moulding, joinery, upholstery, etc. New machines were installed in the sections and this subsequently was followed by a slight improvement in production.

In January, 1965, the Department was changed to a Corporation. The Corporation is a body comprising of nine members who occasionally meet to discuss matters in the interest of the industry.

The labour strength of the Corporation consists of 616 workers and 12 senior staff employees.

Sections:

The Corporation is divided into the following sections:

Motor Transport Section:

The section is responsible for the transportation of logs obtained from an area which is about 40 miles from the factory. The section also deals with repairs and storage of all the Corporation's vehicles.

Sawmill:

The primary sawing of logs to required dimensions is carried out here. A new production line is being installed.

Timber Issues Department:

This is where the sawn timber from the sawmill is transported to, sorted out for stacking and sale to local customers, and export. This section also has three timber drying kilns for drying timber for use in the workshops.

Furniture Production Department:

This section comprises the following sub-sections:

- a) moulding section
- b) furniture workshop section
- c) sanding section
- d) final finishing section
- e) upholstery section
- f) furniture sales and despatch section
- g) joinery section

Moulding Section:

This is where all types of mouldings are produced e.g.: wall paneling, parquet floor blocks, door jambs, cover strips and timber components for export.

Joinery Workshop:

The following are produced in this section: prefabricated houses, school furniture, doors and windows, and small runs of house-hold joinery.

Furniture workshop:

This workshop produces mainly house-hold furniture such as: wardrobes, side-boards, chairs, show cases, dressing tables, beds of all types, bedside cabinets, bookcases and shelves, dining tables, etc.

Sanding Section:

Completed items from the moulding, joinery and the furniture workshops are sanded here.

Polishing:

This is another section where items completed from the sanding section are polished or painted to obtain a good finish. Some of the items leaving this section go straight to the furniture store for despatch to the sales centres.

Final Fitting:

Some items such as certain chairs that require re-assembling after upholstering are done here. The following are also included:

fixing mirrors to cabinets

fixing locks - (drawer locks, cupboard locks), handles and castors.

Upholstery:

In this section, furniture for upholstering are finished here. Besides the general upholstering, soft furnishing is done on a smaller scale.

Furniture sales and Despatch Section:

The weekly production received from all the sections above are passed to this section, for delivery to their various customers.

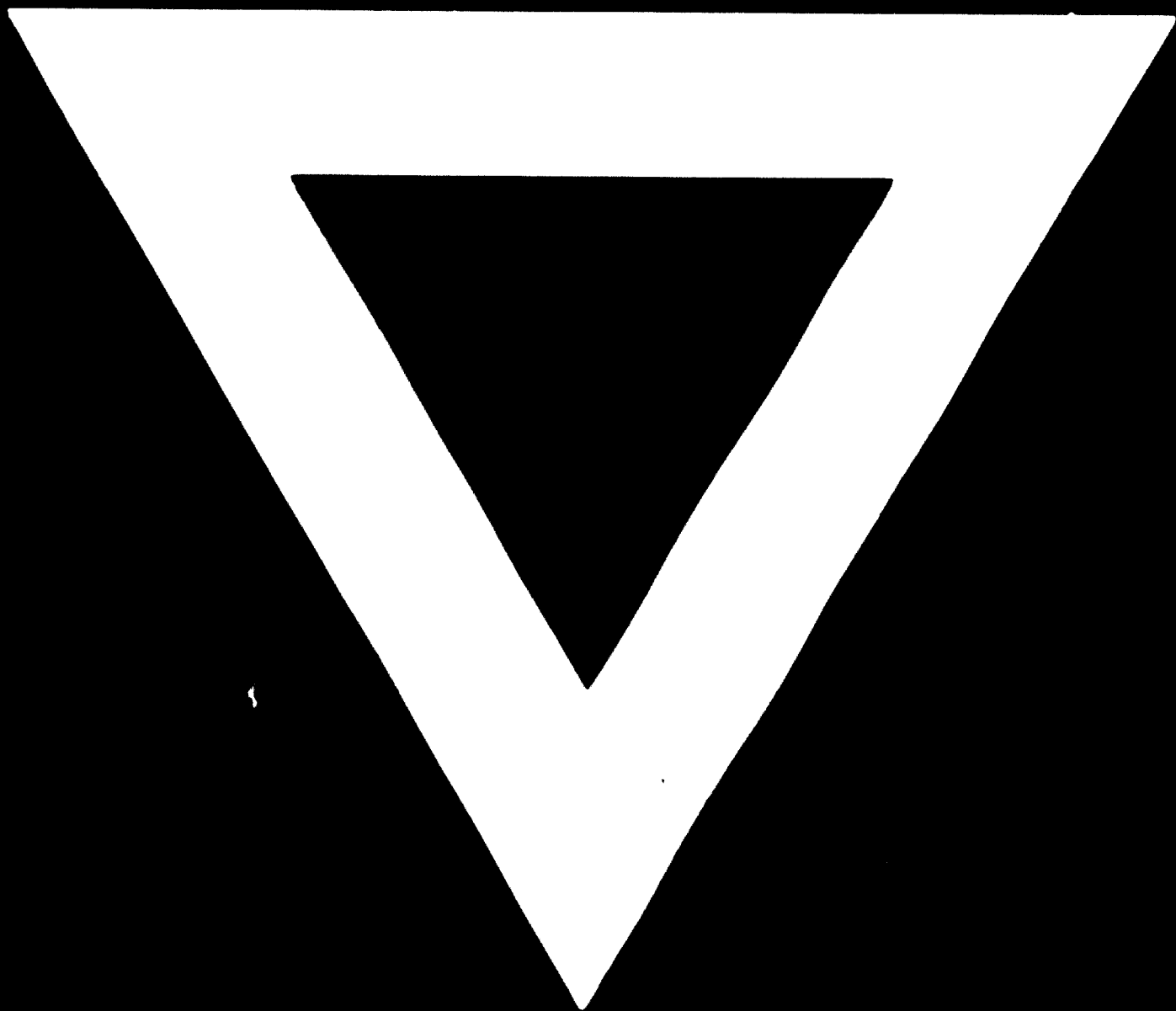
Need for future prospects for development:

Forest Industries Corporation is in need of:

- a) A furniture designer to train the Sierra Leoneans in the field of design and to improve on the quality of the existing products.
- b) Modern woodworking machinery to boost production.



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