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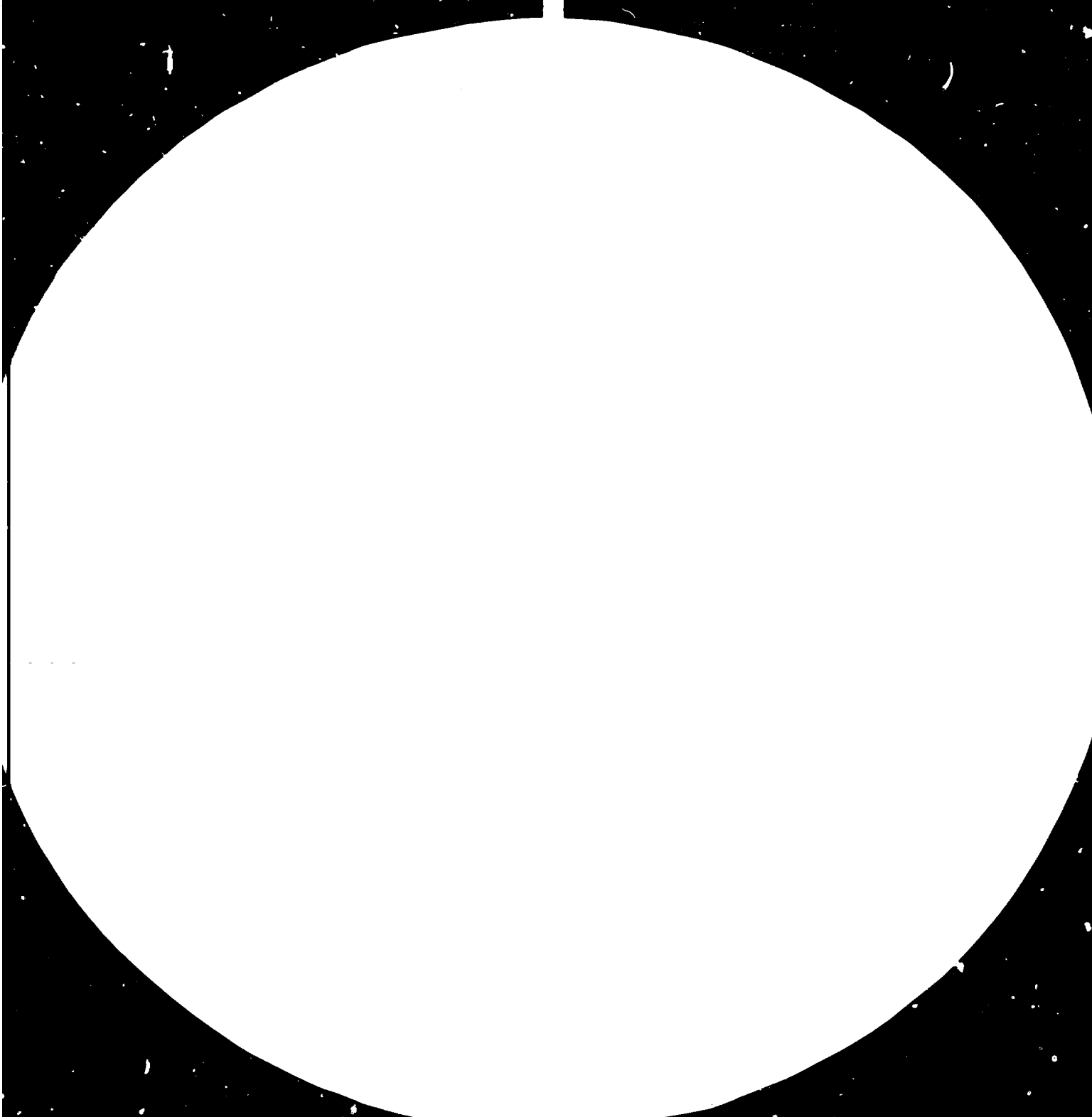
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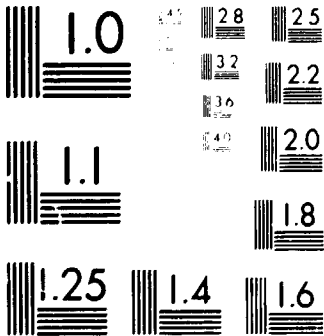
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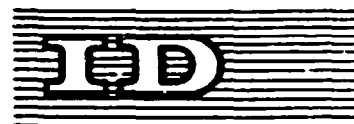


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THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY OF HONDURAS *

by

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Honduras is a country situated in the heart of Central America. Its boundaries are: to the southwest the Republic of El Salvador, on the northwest the Republic of Guatemala, on the southeast the Republic of Nicaragua, to the north the Atlantic Ocean and on the south the Gulf of Fonseca in the Pacific Ocean. It has a population of 3,2 million inhabitants and an area of 112,088 sq.km.

Because of its geographical situation within the Torrid Zone, only two seasons are observed: rainy and dry season, both are propitious for agricultural activities proper to the climate.

The soil composition is a 60 percent forest zone and 40 percent agricultural zone.

The forest conformation of the soil has beautiful contrasts with nature itself because of its lush forests.

We have many valuable woods such as mahogany, laurel, teak, primavera, cedar and pine, all of which are highly quoted in the international lumber trade.

In order of importance, lumber represents the third item within Honduran exports, having reached in 1977, 94,4 million of Lempiras^{1/} 84,6 million in 1978 and in 1979 it has reached 84,1 million of lempiras.

As consequence of the policy of preservation of forests, implemented by CORPORACION HONDUREÑA DE DESARROLLO FORESTAL (CORDEFOR) in the last years, the exported volume remained the same, therefore international prices are directly responsible for the improvement in the value of exports. The most important markets for our lumber still are the Carribbean and Europe, although the United States of America and Venezuela are also important.

1/ US\$ 1 = Lempiras 2

The CORPORACION HONDUREÑA DE DESARROLLO FORESTAL (COHDEFOR), is the body that controls, representing the state, all kind of forestry activities.

Many enterprises are authorized by this organization to exploit forests, some to fell trees, others to operate sawmills that process timber to be sold in tabular feet, while others are manufacturers: furniture factories, houses artisans, etc.

Both private and government banks have given forestry a great support, and according to the statistics of Banco Central de Honduras, private banks granted : loans for forestry and wood manufacturing enterprises totalling 2,954 million of Lempiras in 1977, in 1978 these loans were increased reaching a total of 3,336 million Lempiras.

This money in flux by private banks was spread through all enterprises dedicated to the woodworking operations indicated above.

There is a promising future for the furniutre industry in Honduras, since there is a wide national market that grows constantly with the development of programmes for house building, population growth, etc. The country is already exporting furniture and furniture parts on a medium scale to different markets in the continent. competing with other suppliers, confirming that in spite of the notorious lack of competent labour our quality is superior to those of other countries, therefore a bigger production would be easily placed in new markets.

The furniutre industry in Honduras is faced with many problems among them the following are major ones:

Supplying of wood:

Although COHDEFOR controls forestry, there are not enough suppliers on a big scale that have optimum conditions to offer a better quality and quantities of lumber. There is enough wood to be exported in the country, but unfortunately those suppliers do not have the proper woodworking machinery for a better exploitation and neither do they have qualified personnel to get the best of this natural resource. The lack of good

roads in and out of the forest causes problems in the transportation of the lumber, incurring in delays of delivery and also increasing the cost of deliveries to the factories and workshops.

Dry kilns:

Very few sawmills in Honduras have dry kilns to dry wood, this forces the industry to obtain green lumber and build their own kilns, some of them use Diesel or wood waste as fuel. They are encountering difficulties due to the lack of efficient or technical personnel familiar with the techniques of dry kilns.

Tool maintenance:

This topic is vital in the wood industry. It is a serious problem in Honduras, since it is very difficult to find qualified persons that can provide the service to keep working at full capacity whole plants.

Manufacture techniques:

The constant preoccupation of manufacturers force them to travel frequently abroad, looking for woodworking machinery and information of the last achievements, specially in design. Furniture manufacturers are up to date with world trend using as a sample the United States of America whose influence is very heavy in the Central American area, because of its nearness and access facilities.

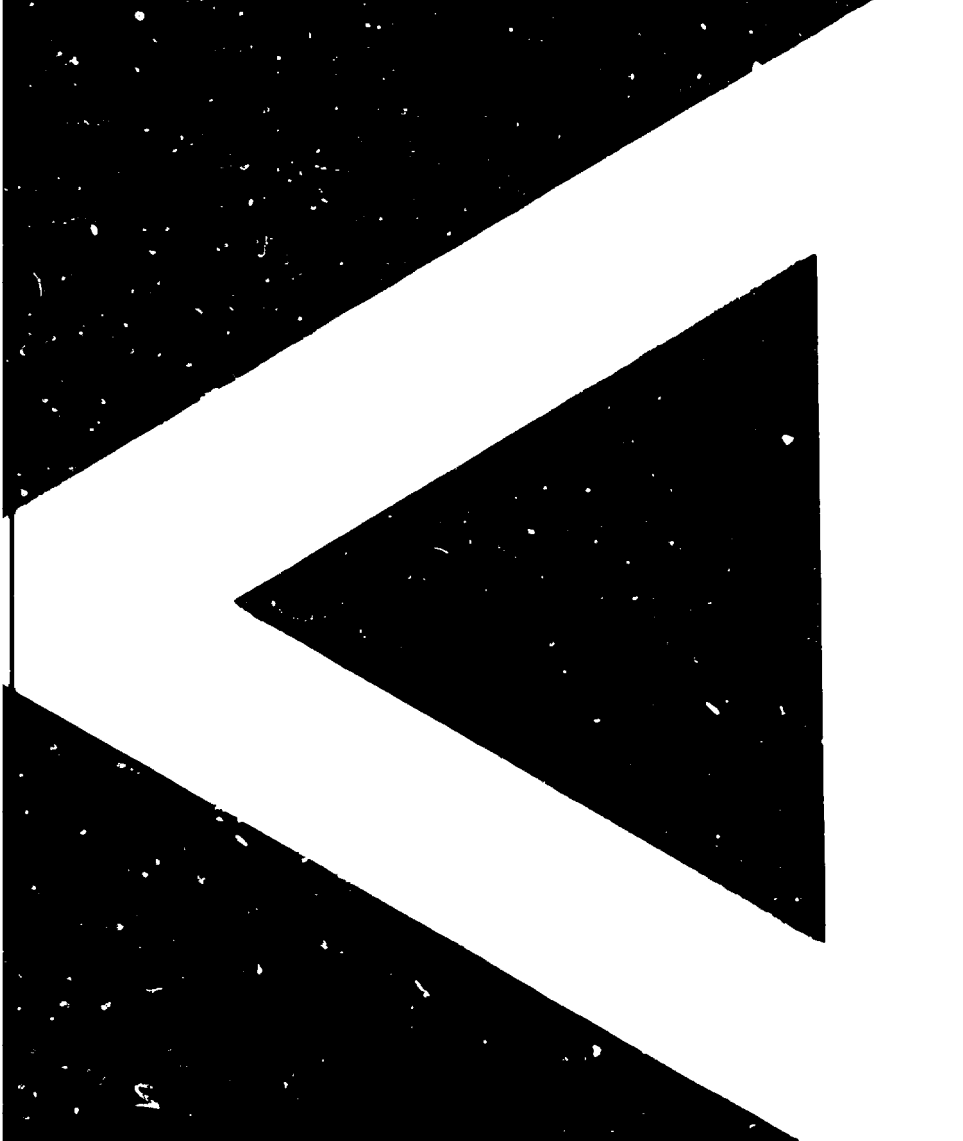
Unfortunately, there are no institutions to train personnel in this field, to obtain better production programmes; even when those are practiced they do not use the proper techniques. For design and assembly established patterns are followed similar to other countries since we do not have designers and creativity is very limited.

Glues:

One of the furniture manufacturers' most serious problems is the lack of knowledge in selecting the proper glue for his product. Climate variations in our country cause adhesion problems since a certain glue can give good results but a change of weather can cause problems. This occurs although there are several well-known brands of glues, both national and foreign.

Finishing:

Generally speaking the finishing of our furniture is satisfactory, and within our possibilities, for we do not have proper systems for this form of work, specially in mass production. We do have quality control that supervise finishing to meet demands, but we know that it can be improved with the proper technical advice. Conveyor systems would be of great help for series production. Sealer, lacquer and other products do not have the qualities necessary for wood products.



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