

Interviews with New Ministers

No Shortages: Food Minister

In a radio interview broadcast on 10th May (Budapest 18.00), Imre Kovacs, the new Minister of the Food Industry, said: "I believe the public knows from its everyday life that the food supply position has improved. There are sufficient quantities of foodstuffs and consumer goods at the disposal of the consumers. So far, no shortage has become manifest. In my opinion, taking our present stocks and the anticipated crop into consideration, there will be no supply difficulties this year, although minor difficulties can be expected in the summer in drinks - wine and beer... There will be no shortage of cigarettes; we have quickly remedied the damage caused by the counter-revolution. Recently, however, as a result of certain rumours, large quantities of cigarettes have been bought up... The essence of the Government's plan is to draw up a list of those articles which we intend to market in a new form or in new packings. We want to come into line with the more advanced countries within the next year or two..."

Foreign Trade: Jence Incze

In an interview, broadcast on 13th May (Budapest 19.00), Jence Incze, the newly-appointed Minister of Foreign Trade, said:

"Strengthened by the confidence the National Assembly has placed in me, we shall continue with all our strength the work that we have been doing in the past few months under my leadership. Our tasks are manifold. Our most important task is to stabilise the standard of living, and to create the ways and means to increase our foreign trade. In the last quarter of the year, we carried out our work successfully, we believe. Our task lay above all in the resumption of production and, parallel with that, to ensure the deliveries of raw materials and semi-finished products in the sphere of agriculture and industry. We may safely say that we have discharged the tasks that lay ahead of us."

Interviewer: "Are we going to establish fresh trade relations with more countries?"

Incze: "We are doing this, and we are extending our relations with those countries with which we already had trade relations. We are doing so not only by increasing our turnover quantitatively, but also by widening the variety of products in which we deal. With the socialist countries we have by now largely completed our agreements ... and we now have trade relations with 90 countries, of which 75 to 80 belong to the ranks of the Western and overseas countries."

Interviewer: "The Hungarian Minister of Finance, Istvan Antos, said in his report that the foreign trade sector was still contending with deficit. Will you please make a statement on this subject?"

Jence Incze: "For 1957, we have settled this problem by bridging most of the deficit between the foreign currencies to be paid for imports and those produced by our exports, by using the credits we are receiving from the socialist countries. At the same time, however, we have already set about solving the plans of the new perspectives, whose new line is aimed at strengthening and stabilising the confidence of foreign countries in the ability of Hungary's foreign trade to honour the deliveries, in its solvency, and in the quality of our products."