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SOVIET DECREE INDICTS AGRICULTURAL FAILURES AND
ATTACKS LAGGING GRAIN PRODUCTION

- I. Major points in the 2 March Land Reclamation decree of the Soviet Party Central Committee.
 - A. The initial results of Soviet agricultural program begun last August are sharply criticized.
 - B. In attacking inadequate grain production for the first time, the decree reverses the earlier position of Malenkov and Khrushchev who last autumn expressed satisfaction with Soviet grain production and treated it as the only sector of Soviet agriculture which was above criticism.

- II. The decree specifies the following failures of the general agricultural program.
 - A. Livestock breeding is lagging, supplies of fodder are even below those of 1952, and herds are now lower than in 1940.

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B. Inadequate production of agricultural machinery

in 1953 has caused shortages of mechanized equipment for agriculture.

C. The State Planning Commission, headed by Deputy

Minister Saburov, which had formerly escaped the

rising barrage of criticism of economic ministries,

was singled out for censure for misguiding agricultural production.

III. The decree further notes failures in grain production.

A. Grain yields are deficient and grain acreages, because

of mismanagement, have fallen below the 1940 level.

B. Grain production has failed to keep pace either with

the requirements of the expanding population or with

"growing export needs."

IV. Grain failures are reflected in the shifting Soviet

trade pattern.

A. Grain exports, traditionally the most dependable

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past year but are counted upon to play a major role in the projected expansion of Soviet trade with the West.

- B. For example, the value of Soviet 1953 grain exports to the United Kingdom, its largest Western customer, fell to roughly \$10,000,000 from the 1952 total of approximately \$100,000,000. The USSR has substituted gold for wheat in its export pattern with the UK.
- C. Similar but smaller declines have been noted in Soviet grain exports to other Western countries.

V. Remedies proposed by the decree.

- A. In the next two years, more than 30,000,000 acres of marginal land in Kazakstan and in the Urals-Volga region are to be put into production.
- B. The government plans to dispatch this year 100,000 new workers to the lands to be reclaimed in addition to technicians who are to be diverted from established Machine Tractor Stations and from industry.

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C. Despite these measures, unfavorable soil and climate conditions in the areas to be reclaimed limit the prospects of success.

VI. Implications

- A. The candid revelations of the new decree provide further indications that Soviet agricultural progress is falling far short of Soviet expectations and threatens the success of the entire consumer goods program.
- B. The new emphasis on grain production reflects Soviet difficulty in supplying sufficient alternative exports to finance a large-scale increase in imports.
- C. This decree's criticism of the State Planning Commission may reflect on its chairman, Saburov, thought to be a protege of Malenkov. However, the scope of the criticism also includes Party responsibility for agricultural failures.

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