

Figure Tops Major Nations

Soviets Claim 7% Gain In Economy During '65

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MOSCOW, Feb. 2—The Soviet Union today claimed a 1965 economic growth of "almost 7 per cent"—the highest of any major nation in the world.

The United States announced last month that its 1965 growth rate was 5.5 per cent. This had been expected to be the world's best, with the Soviet rate around 4 per cent.

The Soviet report, issued by the Central Statistical Board, did not say how the 7 per cent figure was reached, or whether it was "corrected" to allow for price increases.

Other Soviet figures for 1965 included:

- A 1 per cent increase in farm output, despite weather problems that cut grain crops from 15.1 million tons in 1964 to 120.5 million in 1965.

- A 6 per cent increase in national income, an 8.6 per cent boost in industrial production, and a 7 per cent improvement in profits from the national economy.

- The consumer goods industry, until recently the poor relation of the Soviet economy, is growing almost as fast as heavy industry. Consumer goods output rose 8.5 per cent in 1965, it said, compared with 8.7 for heavy industry.

- Foreign trade increased by 5 per cent and internal retail trade by 10 per cent.

- The 1959-1965 seven-year plan surpassed its target of an 80 per cent increase, hitting 84 per cent instead.

- Average monthly wages of industrial and clerical workers went up from 90 to 95 rubles (\$100 to \$105.6). With bonuses and fringe benefits, the average paycheck went up from 121 to 128 rubles (\$134 to \$142).

- About 78 million square meters of new housing space was built—below the 84 million square meters promised by Premier Alexei Kosygin at the end of 1964.

Most of the claims today were trimmed below those published in a mid-year report July 25.

At that time, the government reported increases of 11 per cent in profits and 9.3 per cent in industrial output.

The preliminary report gave few firm figures, beyond grain output, average wages and housing construction. Most of the increases were couched in percentages.

Agricultural output rose

slightly, despite the 20 per cent drop in grain crops, because of an increase in livestock and dairy products, farm experts here said.

This livestock increase was based on a bumper crop of feed grains in 1964. Feed grains suffered in 1965 and this fact—coupled with the current hoof and mouth epidemic—was expected to cut both livestock and total farm output in 1966.

In a speech on Dec. 10, 1964, Kosygin had outlined his goals for the economy. The report today indicated most were surpassed.