

PARIS: BIGGEST EVER . . .

Inside, half the US pavilion reflects that passion for windowless, gloomy half-dark which Americans value in their restaurants and bars, though girls in wildly colourful Braniff uniforms light up the place a bit. It is a well designed but generalised exhibition, in which real integration has not been achieved, for it remains a collection of individual company exhibits. The other half of the US pavilion is simply a bazaar of US ancillary manufacturers occupying very cramped and pokey stands. But the Americans are obviously determined not to be considered linguistic slouches this year; everything is so diligently translated that the Sea Knight helicopter comes out as *le Chevalier de la Mer*.

All in all, the Americans can be said to be exhibiting in real depth; if you are in the market for a left-hand thread, insulated, self-locking, case-hardened scroffle nut in thirteen sizes you will probably find five companies to quote you instantly. Not so the USSR, whose national pavilion, given over entirely to full-size space vehicle and satellite mock-ups, save for Tu-144 and Tu-154 airliner models, is superficially most impressive but lacking in all detail. Outside in the static park the Russians play several variations on three or four basic helicopter themes; they field passenger and civil An-24s, the big Il-62, small Tu-134 and smaller Yak-40, and have single-seat aerobatic and four-seat touring versions of the Yak-18. All, of course, dwell in the shadows cast by the big An-22 and far more impressive Vostok space capsule and booster on its rail-mounted launcher.

But, sadly, the Russians are as lacking as ever in their understanding of how the western air world works. Questions about price and delivery are met with blank incomprehension or are stone-walled; supporting literature is sometimes absent, and usually inadequate.

Press and public relations are quite grotesque. The Russians, to their credit, were ready for the opening well ahead of everybody else, but on pre-preview day their exhibits were covered, or closed and locked. "Tomorrow; we show you tomorrow," when the lifting of a piece of plastic would have given one a more useful view today. In some regards, tomorrow proves never to arrive. These comments, however, do not apply to the Soviet metallurgical pavilion, where everything is crisp, helpful, and tri-lingual and where the exhibits, metallurgists are saying, are really something to write home about.

Britain's national pavilion is a spacious information centre mounted jointly by Mintech, MoD, BoT and the SBAC, and designed by the CoI. Devoid of gimmicks and "themes," it is a competent if low-key effort. It seems somewhat wasteful of the space employed. Probably better value, on a £££/sq ft basis, will prove to be the big collective stands on which the SBAC and the Society of Environmental Engineers have gathered together a wide selection of the smaller British equipment companies, for comprehensive displays which are drawing many serious enquiries and promise to result in good business.

A similar approach has been adopted for Canada's unified national exhibit—a compact collection of company stands with an intelligible sales message for the range of aircraft and drones which Canadair, DHC and Found Brothers, backed by their equipment compatriots, have to offer.

So, finally, to the host nation. The French, like the US, have chose a historical centrepiece for their main pavilion—the actual Breguet 19 in which Nungesser and Coli made many famous flights. Behind it is ranged an impressive display of technological expertise, with more solid content than the very grand but scarcely intelligible other French pavilion, devoted to *l'Espace*, at the main entrance to the show, the salient message of which seems to be that the urge to exhibit was more in evidence than equipment to display.

Most of the important aircraft at the show can be identified in this view. It was secured by a "Flight" photographer from a Hughes 300

