

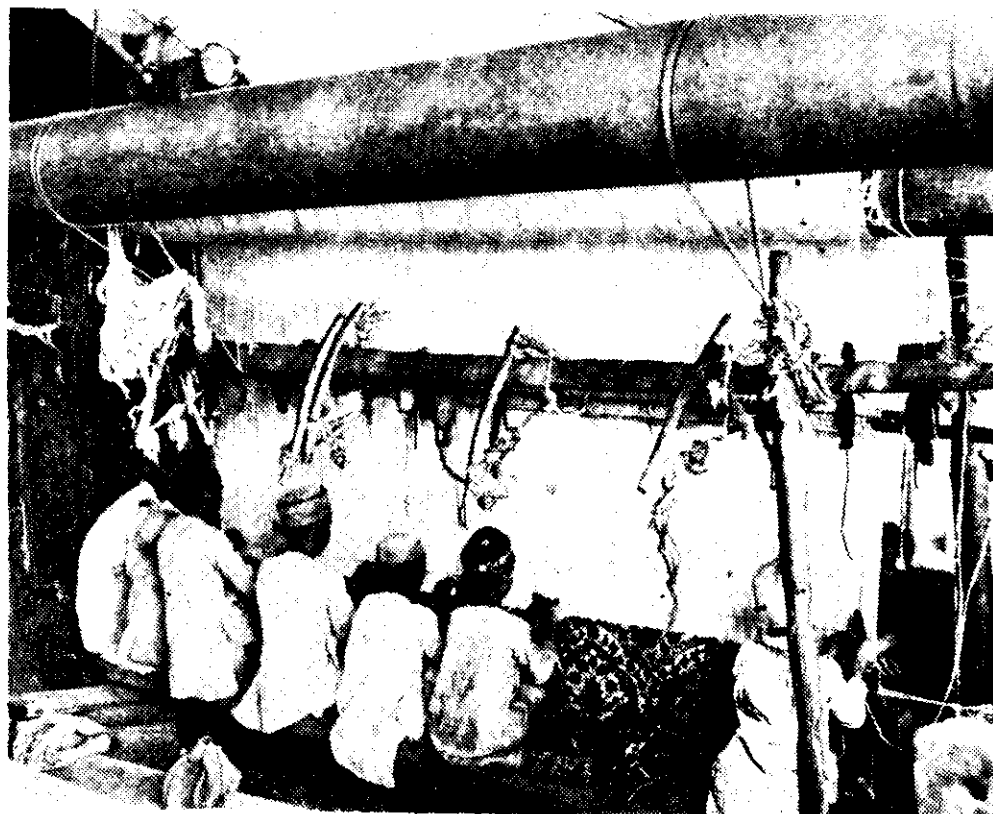
MAGIC CARPET

THE fabulous Spring of Chosroes, a carpet made for a king of ancient Persia, and estimated to have been worth £60,000,000, provides the theme for a dramatic programme, *The Magic Carpet*, to be heard shortly from the ZB stations and 2ZA. Tabari, one of the ablest of Arab historians, tells how the carpet was looted from the palace of Ctesiphon when the Arabs defeated the Persians in 635 A.D. The richest jewels from the royal vaults had been worked into the giant rug, and the conquerors divided the spoils simply by cutting the treasure into some 60,000 pieces.

Tabari's account is one of the earliest records of the art of carpet weaving. It is a sad record, for the Spring of Chosroes was said to have taken more than four years to complete, and was a work of surpassing beauty. But the wide dissemination of the plunder led to the adoption of carpet making in other countries of the East. In the 8th Century A.D. the Moors introduced the art to Spain and it was from there in 1255, that the first carpets travelled to England. Eleanor of Castile, who became the bride of Edward I, took them in her dowry. The English regarded them with some contempt, preferring

their barbarian custom of covering floors with bay and rushes. It was not till 1519, when Cardinal Wolsey secured 60 carpets from the Orient that they began to be adopted more generally. By the time Elizabeth I occupied the throne carpets were being woven in Britain but not till 1740, when a Belgian weaver was smuggled into the country in a sugar-cask was the high-quality Brussels made in Britain.

Written by Allan Sleeman, and produced under his direction at the Christchurch studios of the NZBS, *The Magic Carpet* tells of the magic of the Spring of Chosroes which spread the art of weaving, and of the steady growth in the popularity of the carpet down the centuries. The programme will be broadcast from all ZB stations and 2ZA at 9.30 p.m. on Wednesday October 14.



ANCIENT TECHNIQUES in carpet-weaving are still in use in the East as this photograph, showing Indian workers at a hand-loom, indicates



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