

Jordan) under international supervision. The plan had been drawn up at the request of the United Nations under the direction of the Tennessee Valley authority, which had reviewed and analyzed all past proposals for utilization of the Jordan waters. The plan which resulted was optimistically entitled "The Unified Development of the Water Resources of the Jordan Valley Region". This original plan was considerably modified with a view to meeting specific objections raised by the parties during Mr. Johnston's first and subsequent visits to the Middle East. On his fourth visit, undertaken in August 1955, he carried with him the revised plan with which his name now is associated, embodying new compromise figures for water allocation, and involving a United States offer to pay 2/3 of the cost of the entire project (estimated at \$200 million). Israel was to receive 40% of the total water flow to be shared, and the remaining 60% was to be divided among Lebanon (3.5%), Syria (12.5%) and Jordan (44%). The plan in this latest form provided that neither side would have physical control over distribution of the Jordan waters; this would be in international hands, presumably under a neutral board of engineers.

Mr. Johnston's own assessment of the benefits which could be derived from a comprehensive programme for developing the Jordan River basin is interesting. First, he points out, it would form the basis for an equitable allocation of the available waters, and thus take utilization of the river waters out of the area of controversy between Israel and her Arab neighbours. Second, it would mark at least the beginning of a constructive, practical and long-overdue solution of the refugee programme, in that it would bring into agricultural use sufficient new land to settle many thousands of the refugees. Finally, it would contribute to a general rise in economic levels and thus help to promote social progress in the whole region.

It appears that during his most recent visit to the Middle East Mr. Johnston was able to achieve virtually complete agreement on the technical and engineering details of the plan between Arab and Israeli authorities. The allocation of the controlled waters was agreed upon, and earlier Arab objections to the use of Lake Tiberias as the storage reservoir were withdrawn. There can be no serious doubt that the real burden of current Arab refusal to accept the scheme is almost entirely political. Even Syria, which stands to gain comparatively little under the international plan, and Egypt, which is not directly concerned at all, apparently appreciate the economic desirability of the development programme. Lebanon is only moderately interested, since it has a development scheme of its own in mind, involving exploitation of the Litani river; but for Jordan, full utilization of the River Jordan as well as the Yarmuk offers the only hope of developing sufficient cultivable land to feed even its own population, not to mention the 460,000 refugees within its borders. The chief question of the Arab states is, would the plan really imply recognition of the existence of Israel? It is with this in mind that the Arabs, throughout the negotiations, have maintained their insistence that any water distribution system should be regulated by international authority. The corollary to their legalistic apprehension about recognizing the existence of Israel of course is that the Johnston plan would give Israel means of implanting itself still more securely, by using the new water source to develop more land. Furthermore, it might imply acceptance of the principle of re-settling refugees, rather than repatriating them to Israel.

The immediate issue between Syria and Israel certainly is of a legalistic character, rather than economic; for a unilateral diversion project by Israel would not interfere with Syrian irrigation or power developments, and in any event could be fitted into any international scheme which might be agreed upon later. The essential conflict is that the Syrians say the Israeli digging operations are contrary to the terms of the General Armistice Agreement, in that they constitute strategic work in the demilitarized zone. The Israelis insist that