



OMAN

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Initial par value for Rial Omani

The International Monetary Fund announced on 3rd July that with effect from the following day an initial par value had been established for the rial Omani equivalent to 2.13281 grams of fine gold or 2.4 special drawing rights per rial, corresponding to 14.5833 rials per troy ounce of fine gold and 0.416667 rials per SDR.

The par value of the rial is thus equal to the official par value of the pound sterling established in 1967 (although since June 1972 the pound has in effect had a fluctuating exchange rate), with an approximate rate against the U.S. dollar of \$2.89 per rial.

The Government of Oman had also indicated that it was availing itself of wider margins (i.e. 2½ per cent either side of parity, as provided for in December 1971 and that it accepted the obligations relating to convertibility, etc., laid down under Article VIII of the Fund's Articles of Agreement, becoming the 42nd Fund member to accept Article VIII status.

Oman announces Tax Cuts

The Government of the Sultanate of Oman recently announced cuts in customs duties on imports.

The Oman Government has decided to lift duties on all basic foodstuffs, including rice, flour and teas, as well as cement. The Government has also decided to exempt all merchandise except alcohol from a two per cent municipality tax.

New Hospital at Sinaou

A new hospital was opened at Sinaou at the end of July. Three clinics will also be opened at Ibra, Bilad Bani Bu Hassan and Bilad Bani Bu Ali.

The accompanying pictures show H.M. Sultan Qaboos leading his team in a shooting match held at Arzat in southern Oman on Friday, 19th July. Other teams were led by H.E. the Wali of Dhofar and by the Brigade Commander, Sultan's Armed Forces.



German-Arab Cultural Week

The Government of Oman participated in the German-Arab Cultural Week, held at the University of Tübingen in the German Federal Republic, from Monday, 9th September to Saturday, 14th September.

The week was organised by the German publishing house, Horst Erdmann Verlag, in association with the University of Tübingen, in collaboration with the Institute for Foreign Relations in Stuttgart and the League of Arab States in Cairo.

During the greater part of the week representatives from the Arab countries from the fields of culture, education and information attended lectures and participated in seminar discussions. The major themes were oriental states, cultural exchange and economic co-operation.

The Omani delegation was headed by H.E. Sheikh Amor Ali Ameir, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Information and Tourism, and it included Mr. Mohammed Amin Abdulla and Mr. Salem Said Al-Sayabi, The Minister of Information, H.E. Sayyid Fahad bin Mahmoud Al-Said, also paid a short visit to Tübingen during the course of the conference.

The academic discussions were accompanied by an exhibition mounted by the Arab League and by many of the Arab countries. The Oman stand, which featured the cultural life both ancient and modern of Oman, was one of the larger stands at the exhibition.

During the course of the week a number of concerts and entertainments were given in Tübingen and Stuttgart. A group of 28 folklore dancers from Oman participated in these events, giving performances in Tübingen, Reutlingen and Metzingen.



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- (1) A fine copper studded chest and paintings of Oman on the Oman stand.
- (2) A silver pot specially commissioned in Nizwa for the Exhibition, with coffee pots and other exhibits on the Oman stand.
- (3) (left to right)
A German visitor to the Stand; a member of the folklore team; Miss Enam bin Ahmad Salem Al-Jume, a member of the folklore team; Mr. Salem Said Al-Sayabi.
- (4/5) Omani folklore dancers
- (6) (left to right)
Mr. Salem Said Al-Sayabi and Dr. Krishna Sharma of Horst Erdmann Verlag.
- (7) Visitors to the Oman Exhibition Stand.
- (8) Khunjars and silver jewellery from Nizwa on the Oman stand.



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Jaguar Tactical Support Aircraft

The Jaguar tactical support aircraft, which this week Oman announced it had ordered from the British Aircraft Corporation, are not a product of that company alone. They are the result of inter-European co-operation between Britain and France. Roughly half of both the aircraft themselves, and the engines which power them, are produced in France and half in Britain.

The aircraft is a joint design of BAC and Avions Marcel Dassault-Brequet Aviation, who have factories in several parts of France. When the planes are produced, the airframe is divided between the two countries. This is done by a natural breakdown into sub-assemblies, so that duplication of tooling is avoided. The nose and centre fuselage portions are produced by Dassault Brequet in France, while the wings, rear fuselage and tail surfaces are made by BAC in Britain.

There are dual final assembly lines, one in England and one in France. The first handles all the output for the British Royal Air Force; the second that for the French Air Force. Orders for other countries can be handled by either group.

The engines are also jointly manufactured, by Rolls-Royce in England and Turbomeca in France. The French are responsible for the design and manufacture of the compressor stages, the casing of the engine and the gearbox. Rolls-Royce handles the combustion section, turbines and afterburner, as well as fuel pumps, fuel control and other accessories. As with the airframe there are dual final assembly lines in the two countries.

Those who have seen the Anglo-French Concorde during its stay in the Gulf will realise the very high standards achieved by co-operation in aircraft production between Britain and France. The Jaguar, like the Concorde, can fly at supersonic speeds, but is, of course, much more adaptable. It has been

specially designed to combine the most advanced military capabilities with great simplicity of maintenance, so that it can be serviced away from main bases. It is also capable of operating from airfields with much shorter and less well-prepared runways than other aircraft of the type.

Omani Students for U.K. and France

During September two parties of students left Oman to prepare for higher education courses in the United Kingdom and France.

Over 50 young Omanis, sponsored by the Ministry of Education will proceed initially to English language schools in Bournemouth, Brighton, Cambridge and Exeter to undertake courses of study for periods of up to a year. They will then apply for admission to universities in the United Kingdom and the United States. The Government will encourage them to study for degrees, which will enable them subsequently to take up positions of responsibility in the Sultanate. A spokes-

man for the Ministry said the need is particularly great for agricultural, medical and technical skills. The group includes two girls.

A further 13 young Omanis have gone to Paris, the largest single group ever sent from the Sultanate for further education in France. Five are sponsored by the Oman Foreign Ministry and after the French language course will either join the Foreign Service or study at a French university. The remaining eight are jointly sponsored by the Education Ministry and two French oil companies—C.F.P. and ELF-E.R.A.P.

Oman's Education Minister, H.E. Faisal Ali Al-Said, (centre right) addressing Omani students before their departure for the U.K.



Economic Development

British Water Tanks for New Muscat Town

A total of 68 domestic water tanks, to be used in the new town of Medinat Qaboos, near Muscat, is to be supplied by B.T.R. Reinforced Plastics Ltd., of Uxbridge, Southern England, a member of the International B.T.R. Group.

The new development, named after His Majesty, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, is to cost approximately £20 million and will at first provide 1,000 homes together with shopping and communal facilities. It will house people working in Muscat and Muttrah, on a site overlooking the sea.

The tanks are to be 8 x 4 x 4 feet (2.43 x 1.21 x 1.21 metres) with open tops. Made from 'hot press' moulded glass reinforced plastic, they will be transported to Muscat in sections and assembled on site. The lightweight construction and anticorrosive properties of the tanks make them ideal for the roof space situation.

The order was placed with B.T.R. Reinforced Plastics by Cementation International Ltd., a member of the Trafalgar House Investments Group. Cementation International are responsible for all the engineering work on

the new town project. The architects are Michael Brashier Associates, of London.

Muscat's New Medical Store Complex

A contract for the construction of a medical store complex at Muscat has been given to George Wimpey & Co. Ltd., by the Ministry of Health of the Sultanate of Oman.

The project, valued at approximately £1 million, is for the design and construction of a single storey reinforced concrete framed building with concrete block walling, 250 ft x 145 ft (76 metres x 33.20 metres) together with ancillary outbuildings. These include inflammable store, service block, sewerage treatment plant building and a gatehouse, and comprise an area of 3,300 square feet (306 metres). A car park, access roads and security fence all come within the contract, which began in June.

Copper

The Directorate of Petroleum and Minerals at the Ministry of Development issued a statement, in August, giving details of the large amounts of copper at Arja, 11 km from Al Aseel, West of Sohar.

Chamber of Industry and Trade

Final preparations have been made for establishing the Oman Chamber of Trade and Industry. The board stated that it has chosen as headquarters a site at Zubair Enterprises in Muscat.

The Members of the Committee are: Mr. Mohammed Al-Zubair, Haj Ali Sultan, Mr. Mohsen Darwish, Mr. Said Al-Hashar, Mr. Sulhail Bahwan and Mr. Zaher Al-Harithi.

New Bank in Muscat

Chase Manhattan Bank will open a full-service branch in the Sultanate of Oman this autumn, subject to Federal Reserve Board approval. The Chase facility will be located in the capital city of Muscat.

Omani-Jordanian Air Traffic Agreement

An Air Traffic Agreement was signed on Saturday, 15th June, by H.E. Engineer Abdul Hafidh Rajab and H.E. Dr. Yacoub Abu Ghosh, the Jordanian Ambassador. The agreement offers Alia, the Royal Jordanian Airlines, one weekly flight to Oman on Saturdays from Amman.

Sugar and Cement

In a review of achievements of the Directorate General for Industry during the last year is mentioned the study for the building of a sugar factory with a daily production of 200 tons and the completion of the studies for the building of a cement factory with an annual capacity of 250,000 tons.

Development in Dhofar

The London firm of Sir William Halcrow and Partners has been appointed town planning consultant for the Omani towns of Salalah and Raysut. The Dhofar Development Department has instructed them to set up a special Town Planning Department, which will be staffed by a full-time planning team comprising architects and transportation engineers resident in Salalah.

The team is to provide, during the next 18 months, a training programme enabling local personnel to take over the town planning administration.

The firm has also been instructed to begin a water supply and sewage scheme for Salalah. Designs are also being prepared for the construction of housing units, a public park with swimming pool, children's paddling pool and an adventure playground.

Halcrow has also been instructed to carry out other tasks. These include the modification and extension of the Sultan's Guest Palace. The Provincial Governor, the Wali of Dhofar, requires a new residence which Halcrow is to design. The company will also improve the appearance of Shari Nadhar, the main thoroughfare of the town.

In its endeavour to settle the rural population of the region, the Dhofar Development Department has appointed Halcrow to create a number of small village-settlements on nine selected sites in the Jebel. Each of these will consist of low-income group housing, a mosque, shops and a Wali's house.

As a first step in equipping Dhofar Province with a deep water all-weather harbour, Halcrow will undertake site investigations

and prepare a report on the engineering feasibility of developing the existing Raysut.

To assist the Dhofar Development Department in its forward planning, the consultants will advise on and organise a census of the province's population.

Finally, Halcrow will set up an administrative centre in Muscat, complete with living quarters, transit accommodation, a restaurant and warehouse. The building will be named Southern House and will replace the old Dhofar Centre.

Elsewhere in Oman, the firm has been appointed to develop Hilf village, on the island of Masirah, which requires the installation of independent public utilities, a power station, a desalination plant, refuse disposal and water reticulation and sewerage. An independent Health Centre with associated residential facilities is already in the process of construction, as are certain roads.

Cultural relations with Britain

H.E. Sayyid Faisal Ali Al-Said, Minister for Education, recently discussed with the British Ambassador, Mr. Donald Hawley, cultural and educational relations between Oman and Britain and participation by the Ministry of Overseas Development in a plan by the World Bank for the building of an agricultural secondary school.

Exploitation of Natural Gas

Recently H.M. Sultan Qaboos signed two important agreements for industrialising the natural gas, which has been discovered in the Sultanate.

One agreement has been signed with a French company concerning the production of chemical fertilisers at a capacity of 2,000 tons a day. This project will cost approximately \$400 million and will provide the proposed factory with natural gas by means of a 20 inch pipeline stretching from the fields to the industrial area near the capital and extending for 320 km. The gas discovered will also be utilized for the desalination and the power-house projects in addition to the cement factory.

Another agreement has been signed with an American company providing for the extraction of liquid gas which heretofore was being flared wastefully.

Following the signing of these agreements His Majesty declared that the Sultanate will take the ownership of most of the shares of these two companies. The implementation of these projects will be carried out by the companies from the beginning of 1975.

Oman Visitors at Farnborough

The Omani Deputy Minister of Defence, H.E. Sayyid Fahar bin Taimur Al-Said, was a distinguished visitor to this year's Farnborough Air Show, where an intensive programme was arranged for him covering three days, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 2nd, 3rd and 4th September. He was accompanied by Flt. Lt. Sayyid Talal Al-Said.

For much of the visit he was joined by H.E. Sayyid Thuwaini bin Shihab, Governor of the Capital and Personal Adviser to His Majesty the Sultan, and by Oman's Ambassador in London, H.E. Mr. Nassir Seif Bualy and Mde. El Bualy.

On the first day he was given an official welcome by Mr. Brynmor John, M.P., Under-Secretary for Defence for the Royal Air Force. On that day he was also the official guest at a luncheon given by the British Aircraft Corporation, on the second day at a luncheon given by Britten-Norman and on the third day at a luncheon given by G.E.C. Marconi.

While with Britten-Norman the Minister inspected a Defender. Later he was presented by Mr. Alaister Brown, Group Managing Director of Fairey Aviation, with a silver replica of the plane.

During the course of his visit to the British Aircraft Corporation he also inspected a Jaguar International plane, a more powerful version of the Jaguar now in service with the Royal Air Force and the French Air Force. During the course of the show it was announced that Oman was to purchase 12 of these planes, worth £45 million.

The Minister also paid visits to the displays of the Westland Aircraft Co., Hawker Siddeley Aviation, Ferranti Ltd., and the Plessey Co.

Among other functions, which the Minister attended during the course of his visit, were a reception given by Her Majesty's Government at Lancaster House, a reception given by the British Aircraft Corporation at the Guildhall, a dinner given by the Society of British Aerospace Companies, the organisers of Farnborough International '74, at the Dorchester Hotel, and a dinner given by Airwork Services Ltd.

H.E. Sayyid Fahar bin Taimur Al-Said, Deputy Minister of Defence, in front of the Defender.



The presentation of the silver replica of the Defender—left to right: Mr. Desmond Norman, Joint Chairman of Britten-Norman; Mr. Alaister Brown, Group Managing Director of Fairey Aviation Ltd.; H.E. Mr. Nassir Seif El Bualy, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman in London; Madame El Bualy; H.E. Sayyid Fahar bin Taimur Al-Said, Deputy Minister of Defence.



Flt. Lt. Sayyid Talal Al-Said in the cockpit of the Jaguar receiving instructions from Mr. Glen Hobday, Sales Director of the Military Division of B.A.C., with H.E. Sayyid Fahar bin Taimur Al-Said, Deputy Minister of Defence, looking on.

ough International '74



Left to right: Mr. Khalifa bin Khalfan; H.E. Sayyid Thuwaini bin Shihab, Governor of the Capital and Personal Adviser to H.M. Sultan Qaboos; Madame El Bualy; H.E. the Deputy Minister of Defence; H.E. Mr. Nassir Seif El Bualy, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman in London; Flt. Lt. Sayyid Talal Al-Said; Mr. Desmond Norman, Joint Chairman of Britten-Norman.



H.E. Mr. Nassir Seif El Bualy, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman in London and H.E. Sayyid Fahar bin Taimur Al-Said, Deputy Defence Minister, about to inspect the Defender.



Left to right: Mr. Desmond Norman, Joint Chairman of Britten-Norman with H.E. Mr. Nassir Seif El Bualy, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman in London.



Mr. Glen Hobday, Sales Director of the Military Division of B.A.C., presenting a set of cufflinks to Flt. Lt. Sayyid Talal Al-Said.

Left to right: Mr. Glen Hobday, Sales Director of the Military Division of B.A.C.; H.E. Sayyid Fahar bin Taimur Al-Said, Deputy Minister of Defence; Patrick McNair-Wilson, M.P., Member for the New Forest, in whose constituency the Jaguars are made.

The Hornbeam Line

Two enemy terrorists were captured on Saturday, 6th July, by soldiers of the Northern Frontier Regiment of the Sultan's Armed Forces. The enemy were attempting to cross the Hornbeam Line from east to west. This line, which runs unbroken from Mughsayl on the southern coast deep into the interior of the Jebel, has been so successful in cutting the supply of ammunition, food and medical supplies to the enemy, that they are finding it increasingly hard to continue fighting.

The terrorists were discovered by soldiers of the Northern Frontier Regiment lying naked and bleeding where they had fallen. They had been stripped of their weapons and clothing and left to die by their comrades in arms without so much as a loin cloth. When they were found they were immediately rushed to the Regiment's medical post so that their wounds could be attended to. One was so badly wounded that he later died but the other who had severe chest wounds was taken by helicopter to a surgical centre in Salalah.

They stated that they were part of a group of ten men who were trying to cross the line to get back to the west. Of the ten men, only five had weapons and three were sick. The rest of the group have now withdrawn empty handed to the east of the Hornbeam Line.

Two more enemy fighters rallied to the Government during the same week. One is Masoud Ahmad Said Bait Kashawb Abu Nufl, a former Adoo Firqat leader in so called Ho Chi Min area and an expert in the use of heavy weapons. With him was Said Ahmad Suhail Bait Kashawb, who was also a heavy weapons expert.

H.M. The Sultan visited the officers and men of the Northern Frontier Regiment on the Hornbeam Line on Tuesday, 9th July. He flew in a helicopter of the Airforce to Bole, which is one of the fire positions on the 55 kilometre line stretching from Mughsayl in the south to the Wadi Amat in the north. On his arrival he was met by the commanding officer of the Northern Frontier Regiment and the Firqat leader of the Firqat, Omar ibn Al-Khatib. He was conducted around the position and met the officers and men who man this position. His Majesty was then

shown a 60 mm mortar which had been captured from the Adoo. He saw a demonstration of both 60 and 81 mm mortars in action.

Later His Majesty fired a medium machine gun before leaving for Reef (C.M.M.) another strongpoint to the south of Bole. At Reef he greeted the men of the Northern Frontier Regiment, who had just returned from an all night patrol. His Majesty was then shown two different types of mines which have now been laid along the Hornbeam Line to ensure that Adoo supplies cannot be brought into eastern Dhofar. H.M. the Sultan then flew to Kumasi where he was shown a troop of field artillery in action.



The visit to the Hornbeam Line was completed with a visit to Mughsayl C.M.M. the Headquarters of the Northern Frontier Regiment, here His Majesty was conducted to the artillery battery where he saw the 75 mm pack howitzers lay a very accurate attack on a distant hill. Later at regimental headquarters members of the Regiment's staff were greeted by the Sultan, also present was the Firqat leader of the Firqat, Al Nasar. His Majesty left after luncheon in the officers mess with officers of the Northern Frontier Regiment and both Firqat leaders.

H.M. Sultan Qaboos visiting Omani troops engaged in the defence of the Hornbeam Line.



Salim Said Sa'ad Bait Gauwas, one of the two guerrillas abandoned naked, recovering from severe chest wounds in a surgical centre of the Sultan's Armed Forces in Salalah.

His Majesty paid a further visit to the area on Sunday, 8th September. He went first to his own birthplace at Manura, where there are famous gardens watered by a falaj leading from a spring at Ayn Arzat, which looks down on the Salalah plain. The falaj water channel was one of several damaged by the terrorists in an effort to cut off irrigation from the people of the plain. The Sultan was shown the repair work which has been done since the Government forces cleared the area of terrorists.

His Majesty met members of a Firqat, a Government force of irregulars drawn from the hill people, soon after they returned from a night patrol. These Firqats, who operate in their own areas, are skilled guerrillas who fight fire with fire. He also visited the Ayn Arzat Civil Action team centre, which is part of the programme to rehabilitate the now-liberated area. It consists of a school, a medical clinic and a shop which provides the basic needs of the inhabitants of the area at closely-controlled prices. His Majesty also visited a nearby civilian encampment in Wadi Arzat and took a particular interest in the children and elderly people.

The next day, His Majesty visited Madinat Al-Haq (White City) in the eastern area, a sector where small groups of communist stragglers still hide in the deep wadis. These are being steadily reduced by the Government forces, and the rate of attrition is high.

His Majesty had earlier been to the Wadi Jarsis, north of Salalah. Until about a year ago, when the Sultan's Armed Forces mounted an offensive to clear out the area, the Wadi Jarsis was the scene of considerable rebel activity. It was from there that terrorist rocket attacks on Salalah took place up until 1973. Now peaceful, with contented people living there again, it is an example of the progress which can be made once the terrorist threat is removed.

At Madinat Al-Haq, His Majesty met Firqat leaders and talked to civilian families. He inspected the Civil Action team centre, and the new well, drilled by engineers of the Department of Defence, which has brought plentiful water for the people, and for stock-watering, in a wide area around the centre.

An indication of communist insecurity is the continuing surrender of enemy personnel, particularly in the area between the Hornbeam Line and the Salalah Road. Throughout 1974 the very high rate of voluntary surrenders has been noticeable. During the month of August there were 30 surrenders from the communist forces to the Government bringing the total of such surrenders since 1st January, 1971, to 899. Further surrenders in the early days of September have taken this figure above 900.

Sultan's Forces gain upper hand over Oman guerrillas

The rebellion in Oman's south-west province of Dhofar, now more than five years old, is on the wane, according to an authoritative source.

The rebels appear unable to launch substantial operations, to be short of ammunition and supplies, and have been surrendering with their arms in increasing numbers.

There are two main reasons for the increasing success of Sultan Qaboos's forces.

Firstly, they have steadily grown in number and efficiency, enabling them to adopt tactics which effectively cut off the guerrilla bands of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf from supply, military and political indoctrination bases in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, whose government in Aden sponsors the rebellion with Russian support.

Secondly, the development programme in Oman, which has been steadily pushed forward since Sultan Qaboos took over in 1970, is bringing increasing contentment to the countryside.

The hard core of the rebellion is estimated at 700 fighters, supported by about 1,000 locally recruited or impressed tribesmen whose main task is to secure the lines of communication.

British Personnel

The total armed forces of Oman number about 12,000. These include over 500 British personnel holding various positions of responsibility, including the commander of the forces, and providing training teams. Half are seconded from the regular British forces and half are ex-servicemen on contract to the Sultan.

Dhofar is very mountainous, particularly near the coast, and during the summer monsoon season, the hills are frequently shrouded in mist. Movement is difficult for all but guerrilla forces.

As part of the agreement, between Britain and Oman, which allows the RAF the use of the Masirah Island as a staging post, the RAF Regiment gives local protection to the airfield at Salalah and Wessex helicopters are hired to the Oman Government. Helicopters play an important part in moving troops and supplies, and evacuating casualties.

Shah's interest

There are also about 1,200 regular Persian troops in Oman. The Shah's interest in suppressing the rebellion lies in the importance of the Straits of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman for the export of oil, upon which his revolutionary programme is economically dependent.

Unlike Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which have pipelines to the Mediterranean, Persia, Oman and the Trucial States are dependent on sea transport from the Gulf for the export of oil.

Both the Shah and, on a much more modest scale, Sultan Qaboos, are increasing their navies. The Sultan is to establish a new naval base on Goat Island, which the Royal Navy formerly used.

Main task

Most of the Persian forces in Oman are from their Parachute Brigade, though there are also detachments from the Persian SAS and other arms. Their main task has been to secure and control the so-called Midway Road, which runs inland from Salalah to Thamarit.

A year ago, this was frequently closed by the rebels. Today there is evidence that guerrilla bands operating east of the road are very short of ammunition. The road itself is completely under Omani control.

The main Omani forces in Dhofar are operating along the Yemeni border, 50 miles of the Midway Road from positions known as the Hornbeam Line.

The rebels appear to have lost the ability to mount any significant action against the Omani forces. In the first three months of this year, 60 rebels voluntarily gave themselves up, compared with 13 in the same period last year.

The above article appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* for Monday, 5th August, from Brigadier W. F. K. Thompson, the paper's military correspondent.

Action by Engineers

In mid-September a troop of the army's newly-formed engineers corps completed an operation to blast out some 1,500 tons of rock, including boulders weighing up to 120 tons, and bulldoze a rough but motorable track up the access gorge. Civil engineers will now complete the road-building job. The gorge was blocked to all but pack transport 15 years ago when a huge section of cliff was dislodged by heavy rain.

The Jebel Akhdar—the Green Mountain—features in Omani history as a near-impregnable fortress. As recently as the 1950s supporters of the self-proclaimed 'Imamate' of Oman held it against troops, supported at

one stage by British strike aircraft, backing the Sultan in Muscat as Ruler of all the country.

Now, for the first time in 15 years, trucks can climb the narrow gorge which is the only practicable route to the sheer-sided plateau even for camels and donkeys.

For half a dozen villages, this means a new, secure outlet for all the grapes, pomegranates, apricots, peaches and other produce their fertile soil can grow in its temperate high-altitude climate. Until now, much of what the Jebel Akhdar's farms and orchards produced was left unsold, or spoiled on the slow journey to reach the road to the capital and other towns at the foot of the plateau.



Agriculture

Agriculture has been and will continue to be the major source of employment in Oman. More than 80 per cent of the country's population is engaged in agriculture. After oil, agricultural products are the only other significant exports. The Batinah coast, the interior and the plains around Salalah are the principal areas of cultivation, although there are large herds of cattle in the Jebel area of Dhofar.

The area under cultivation is approximately 36,000 hectares. The main crops grown (figures in brackets indicate the percentage of the total cultivated area for each crop) are as follows: Dates (37%), Lucerne (15%), Onions (10%), Limes (10%), Wheat (3%), Tobacco (3%), Bananas (2%), Mangoes (1%), Coconuts (1%).

The cultivated areas require irrigation as apart from the monsoon regions rainfall provides neither a direct nor a reliable source of water supply. The main source of water supply is ground water, which is brought to the fields either by wells, nowadays operated by small diesel engines, rather than by donkeys or other animals, and by the traditional "Falaj" system. The "falaj" system is an ancient one and generally taps the water table near the foot of the mountains (or the water derived from a spring) and conveys the water underground and then overground in specially constructed channels. The water reaches a central point in the village from which it is distributed to the gardens, via a further system of channels and according to a strict

rota. The "falaj" system is much more widespread in the interior than on the Batinah, and gardens with "falaj" water often have wells in addition, to supplement their "falaj" supply.

Experimental farms were established initially at Nizwa, the old capital in the interior and at Sohar on the coast; however, in 1971 two new experimental farms were established at Wadi Quriyat in the interior and at Rumais on the coast. Nineteen agricultural extension centres have been established throughout the country to pass on the results of this experimentation to farmers.

In 1973 the experimental farms at Nizwa and Sohar were converted into production farms and a new production farm was established at Rumais in order to meet an acute shortage of locally produced vegetables and animal fodder. Two new experimental farms will be established during 1974 at Rumais and Suwaiq; a new production farm is being set up at Rumais.

A water investigation programme has been completed and as a result a water drilling programme, regional water investigations and soil studies are in progress.

Date demonstration farms are being established at Nizwa and Tanuf. Existing gardens at Nizwa and Rostaq are being improved and two date processing plants are being set up. Demonstration farms are being established on the Batinah coast for citrus and vegetable industry programmes and a compact multi-purpose cannery is being established. Studies are being conducted into the feasibility of a sugar factory on the Batinah coast and a Central Research Institute is being established at Rumais.

A livestock veterinary service has been established to treat against disease and to improve breeding and animal feed. A dairy, beef and poultry project is underway at Sohar. Attention is being paid to the feasibility of a commercial animal foodstuff enterprise, using mechanised techniques.

Significant achievements in Dhofar include the establishment of a research station at Rabat, a fodder production farm at Baleed, a livestock, poultry and veterinary centre and an abattoir, all at Salalah. The cultivation of coconuts, on a large scale, and of suitable varieties of soya bean has been recommended following feasibility studies. A vegetable demonstration programme and a compact cannery are planned for Salalah in addition to a livestock demonstration farm.

A project has been implemented to develop land and water resources and experiments are being conducted north of the mountains into the feasibility of producing dates, lucerne and sweet potato.

The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations is assisting the Government with four projects in the following spheres: National Farm Economic Survey, Water Resources Centre, Soil and Water Management, and Crop and Livestock Trials and Extension.

English visitors would certainly appreciate the well laid out vegetable gardens at Rumais, the wheat fields around Nizwa, the terraced rose gardens at Saiq and the cattle breeding establishments at Salalah.

This experimental farm contributes to the development of the new agriculture in Oman.



Welfare in Oman

A soldier of the Sultan's Armed Forces, as he peers through the thick mist which shrouds the mountains of the Dhofar region in southern Oman, is thinking about the wife and children he left in his village, 800 kilometres to the north, in the Jebel Akhdar.

Where a motorable road ends in a rough wadi, another member of the Omani forces sets off on foot to climb, perhaps for several hours, up to a remote hamlet. This village is in the Jebel Akhdar, and is the home of the soldier on duty in Dhofar.

The tie which links the two men across mountain and desert is the knowledge that the little son of the soldier is sick, and may need treatment which cannot be got in the outlying village. The man climbing the mountain is an Agent of the Forces Welfare Service. He will find out what treatment the child needs. He will also decide whether the father should be flown home, from his outpost facing the Communist guerrillas in the Jebel Qara, to be with his family in their time of need. If there are other family problems arising from the child's condition, he will find ways to meet them.

On another day, this same agent may be sitting in his office, at the Jebel Akhdar town of Nizwa, some 20 years ago the scene of embattled insurrection, but now open and prosperous. This time he is dealing with the problems of another soldier from the area, who is building a house, in the local tradition of using the mountain stone almost as nature provides it. Finding the money to pay for the local stone and highly skilled neighbourhood labour is no longer a problem because the soldier is meeting the cost through a loan, which the Welfare agent and his army unit have together negotiated for him.

A second agent is at the Sharia Court in Muscat, helping a soldier who is involved in a civil action. He is there to guide the soldier and to see that he understands the problems of the law.

The day of a third agent includes getting a Defence Department engineer to check that a modern concrete house, being built for a member of the Forces in one of Oman's new towns, is being done to proper standards by the building contractor. Later he will cope with the problem of repairs to a house damaged by a freak rainstorm. If the job costs more than unit funds can provide, the Welfare agent will negotiate a loan to tide the soldier-owner over his difficulties.

Elsewhere a woman agent is dealing with a soldier's wife's problems, which are outside the scope of the men.

In his office, the Force Welfare Officer is finding a job for an ex-serviceman. This veteran will run a lift in one of the capital's new office blocks, and will find that his loss of an arm while in the services is not such a handicap to making a good living as he once feared. The Force Welfare Officer is also dealing with the social problems of a man, once an active fighter, who has been fitted with two artificial legs, but is much too resigned to inactivity for his own good.

There is almost no end to the example of the work done by the Welfare Service since it was set up, on an established basis, in June 1973. Through its eight agents, posted to various centres of northern Oman, where most of the members of the forces are recruited and live, it deals with anything up to 140 cases a month. Before 1973, welfare was done when unit officers had time to spare, and long service officers report that the one year's work of Welfare has already strengthened their soldiers' morale. Formerly the will to help the soldier in difficulties was there, but often both the time and the know how were lacking. Now the soldier at the front knows that goodwill, time and skills are all at the disposal of those he has left at home.

In addition to clerical staff, the Welfare establishment consists of the Force Welfare Officer, two Assistant Force Welfare Officers, eight men agents, all of whom are long-serving warrant officers, and the woman agent who works in her own special sphere. Two of the

men agents have just begun to work independently, after a period of on-the-job training with more experienced colleagues.

Also operating under the general direction of the Force Welfare Officer are eleven *muttawas*, teachers of Islamic religion and law, who deal with all matters of religious significance, such as arrangements in the event of deaths. Three of them work in Dhofar Province. In Dhofar, otherwise, the work done in northern Oman by the welfare agents is handled by station staff officers. Dhofaris, particularly those in the irregular *firqat* forces, have not the same problems as the northerners, who are far from home. The Dhofaris can almost always settle their problems through local tribal and family arrangements.

Some idea of the involvement in welfare tasks in the Sultan's Armed Forces can be got from the size of the Housing Fund alone. It was opened in June 1973. In just over a year it had provided loans to servicemen totalling well over RO 500,000. Through it, men with no homes of their own can provide these, and repay the loan, interest free, over 10 years. If they already have a house, and the family is outgrowing the accommodation, they can get a loan to expand the building. The fund is open to all officers and men resident in Oman.

On the average, each Welfare Agent deals with 20 cases of major problems a month, making around 140 for the whole force. This total may increase now that the two trainees are out on their own. The present establishment can cope with all the problems likely to arise in the foreseeable future.

One of the tasks, they say, which gives most satisfaction, is finding jobs for ex-servicemen, and particularly for the disabled. Around 60 were placed in good jobs, within their physical capacity, last year. The department keeps a list of men available, and welcomes enquiries from commercial firms, embassies and other organisations who may be seeking reliable men for such duties as watchmen, doorkeepers and the like.

Agreements Between Oman and Iran

Following the visit of H.M. Sultan Qaboos to Tehran in March two agreements between Iran and Oman were signed in Tehran on Thursday, 25th July, by H.E. Mr. Qais Al-Zawawi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman and Mr. Abbas Ali Khalatbari, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. These agreements are for delineating the continental shelf between Iran and Oman and for Iranian-Omani cultural arrangements. The aim of the latter is to facilitate the visits of scientists, academics, students and the members of cultural societies from the two countries, to grant educational and training scholarships and to evaluate the educational certificates and scientific degrees awarded by the universities and colleges in the two countries. The two sides will also—as far as possible and provided it accords with their regulations, laws and common standards—strive to amend erroneous material published in their textbooks about each other. This agreement will be in force from the date of the exchange of the instruments of ratification.

Following the signing of the agreements, The Minister of State of the Sultanate of Oman, referring to the conclusion of the agreements, said: "The signing of the two agreements is a step towards strengthening the existing friendly relations between the two countries." He added "I believe that the conclusion of such agreements is not only useful and fruitful to the two countries, but also useful to all the countries of the region." Alluding to the relations between Iran and Oman, the Oman Minister of State pointed out: "These friendly relations, founded under the leaderships of the two countries' sovereigns, are one of the most useful and effective developments in the region." In conclusion, the Oman Minister of State of Foreign Affairs said: "I take this opportunity to convey the most sincere greetings of H.M. Sultan Qaboos, the Government and the people of Oman to the Shahanshah Aryamehr, the great leader of the Iranian nation, the Government and the people of Iran. I wish ever-increasing progress for Iran."

Foreign Minister Khalatbari referred in an interview given to the Pars News Agency to relations between Iran and Oman as friendly, adding: "These relations stem from the very sincere and fraternal relations existing between the Shahanshah Aryamehr and H.M. Sultan Qaboos." The Foreign Minister continued: "The cultural agreement which was signed today will open a new chapter in the history of the relations between the two countries and will provide the opportunity for us to expand bilateral cultural relations through scholarships and educational grants as well as cultural co-operation in various fields." As for delineating the continental shelf between the two countries, the Iranian Foreign Minister said "Now that, as ordered by the Shahanshah Aryamehr, the two countries, continental shelf has been fully determined and recognized in accordance with international law, the two sides will be able to exploit the seabed and the resources under it."

Diplomatic Initiatives

Oman Participates in the Foreign Ministers Conference of Islamic States

An Omani delegation attended the Fifth Islamic Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which opened on Thursday, 20th June. The delegation was headed by H.E. Mr. Yousef Al-Alawi, Under Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and consisted of Dr. Yousef Ni'matallah, Mr. Ismail Sumeid, Mr. Issa Ahmed, Mr. Hassan Mohsen and Mr. Rashid Salem Lamki.

Oman Participates in the World Conference on the Law of the Sea

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Macki, the Oman Ambassador at the U.N., headed the Omani delegation to the World Conference on the Law of the Sea, which opened in Caracas, Venezuela, in July. Other members were Mr. Ahmed Al-Jamali, Deputy Leader, and Mr. Seif Al-Din Suleiman.

Visit of King Hussein

H.M. King Hussein of Jordan paid a brief visit to H.M. Sultan Qaboos at Salalah on Saturday, 6th July. The two sovereigns discussed matters of mutual interest to their two countries.

Diplomatic Relations with Brazil

On Sunday, 7th July, the establishment of diplomatic relations between Oman and Brazil at ambassadorial level, was announced.

The Sultan received the U.A.E. Minister for Foreign Affairs

On Saturday, 13th July, H.M. Sultan Qaboos received at his Palace in Salalah the U.A.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ahmed Suwaidi, and the delegation with him, which included the Minister of Education and the Minister of State for Internal Affairs. H.M. Sultan Qaboos reviewed with the delegation matters of mutual interest to the two countries. After the meeting the U.A.E. delegation toured Salalah and Raysut.

Oman gets first U.S. Ambassador

The first American Ambassador resident in Oman, Mr. William D. Wolle, presented his

credentials at the Palace on Wednesday, 17th July, and took up residence in the Embassy, which was declared officially open in Muscat on 4th July, 1972—the 198th anniversary of American Independence.

Mr. Wolle entered the Foreign Service in 1951. His first assignment was as Consular Officer, then Economic Officer, in Baghdad. He next served as Consular Officer in Manchester and afterwards in 1957 spent a year in Arab language and area training in Beirut. Mr. Wolle's later postings were in Aden and Jeddah and from 1962-63 he served in Washington in the Department of State, first as International Economist and then as International Relations Officer.

From 1965-67 he was officer in charge, Arab-Israeli Affairs, and after attending the National War College during 1967-68 he was Counsellor for Political Affairs in Kuwait. From 1970-72 he was Commercial Officer in Amman and since 1972 he has served as Commercial Officer in Nairobi.

He is fluent in Arabic, French and German.

New Ambassador to France

On Friday, 26th July, H.E. Dr. Kamal Hagraas presented his credentials to President Giscard d'Estaing as the first Omani Ambassador to France. He also presented his credentials to the Director-General of U.N.E.S.C.O. as Oman's Permanent Representative to the Organisation. He is also Ambassador Non-Resident for Switzerland.

Omani Foreign Minister Visits Bahrain

On his return from a visit to Iran, H.E. Mr. Qais Al-Zawawi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, visited Bahrain, on Saturday, 27th July, where he held discussions with the Bahrain Foreign Minister, Shaikh Mohamed bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa, on matters of mutual concern to the two countries.

Oman's Representative at U.N. Geneva Office

On Wednesday, 28th August, H.E. Mohammed Ali Ghariani, Minister Plenipotentiary, presented his credentials to the Director-General of the United Nations Bureau in Geneva, as Oman's Permanent Representative to that Bureau.

Omani Ambassador to Algeria

On Friday, 30th August, H.E. Ibrahim Al-Harithi presented his credentials to President Boumedienne as the first Ambassador of Oman to Algeria.

H. E. Mr. Qais Al-Zawawi visits Cairo

H.E. Mr. Qais Al-Zawawi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, attended the 62nd Ordinary Session of the Arab League, which was held in Cairo at foreign minister level from Sunday, 1st September to Thursday, 5th September.

Before leaving Cairo the Minister conferred with the Egyptian Foreign Minister concerning matters of mutual concern to Oman and to the United Arab Republic.

Visit of American Minister

On Wednesday, 18th September, H.M. Sultan Qaboos received in audience Mr. Sydney Super, Deputy Assistant of the U.S. Minister of State for Near East and South Asian affairs. Subsequently Mr. Super had discussions with H.E. Sayyid Thuwaini bin Shihab, Governor of the Capital and Personal Adviser to His Majesty, and with H.E. Mr. Qais Al-Zawawi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

Appointments and Promotions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Recent appointments in the Ministry include:

1. Sheikh Ibrahim bin Hamad Al-Harthi has been promoted to Ambassadorial rank in the Ministry.
2. Mr. Ahmad Mohammed Nasser Al-Lamki has been appointed to the rank of Ambassador Plenipotentiary in the Ministry.
3. Dr. Kamal Mohammed Hagraas has been promoted to the rank of Ambassador.
4. Mubarrak Mohamed Al-Zawawi has been appointed Ambassador Plenipotentiary in the Ministry.
5. Nazar Mohammed Ali, the First Secretary in the Embassy in London has been appointed to the General Secretariat of the Ministry as Director of International Affairs with effect from 1st September, with the same rank.

H.E. Mr. William D. Wolle presenting his credentials to H.E. Mr. Qais Al-Zawawi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.



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