

KING IBN SAUD OF SAUDI ARABIA SITTING ON HIS THRONE IN CAPITAL OF RIAD IS HERE FLANKED BY LIFE EDITOR NOEL BUSCH (LEFT) AND PHOTOGRAPHER ROBERT LANDRY

LIFE VISITS ARABIA

EDITOR BUSCH AND PHOTOGRAPHER LANDRY CALL ON KING IBN SAUD AT HIS DESERT CAPITAL

For all practical purposes Saudi Arabia is a closed country to the Christian world. Fewer than a hundred Europeans or Americans have visited its desert fortresses in modern times. No non-Moslem journalist has ever been officially permitted to visit its capital at Riad. Yet this huge country is the heart of the Arab world (it contains Mecca) and its King, Ibn Saud, only a remote and misty figure to outsiders, is one of the world's strong men.

Late last winter His Majesty gave extraordinary consent to LIFE to visit his country. Accepting this royal courtesy, LIFE Editor Noel F. Busch and LIFE Photographer Robert Landry flew from Cairo to Jedda, the Arabian port on the Red Sea, where Ibn Saud had a motor convoy ready to carry his guests across the desert to Riad. Mr. Busch describes the trip thus:

"Our convoy consisted of two cars. One was a Nash sedan, for Landry, myself, our chauffeur, our interpreter and our major domo whose function, as far as I could see, was to provide the provisions and pray us out of tight spots, which occurred frequently. The other car was a rickety Chevrolet truck heavily overburdened with tents, food, bedding, etc., and populated in addition by 14 assorted soldiers, cooks, guides, etc., together with three sheep and a flock of chickens.

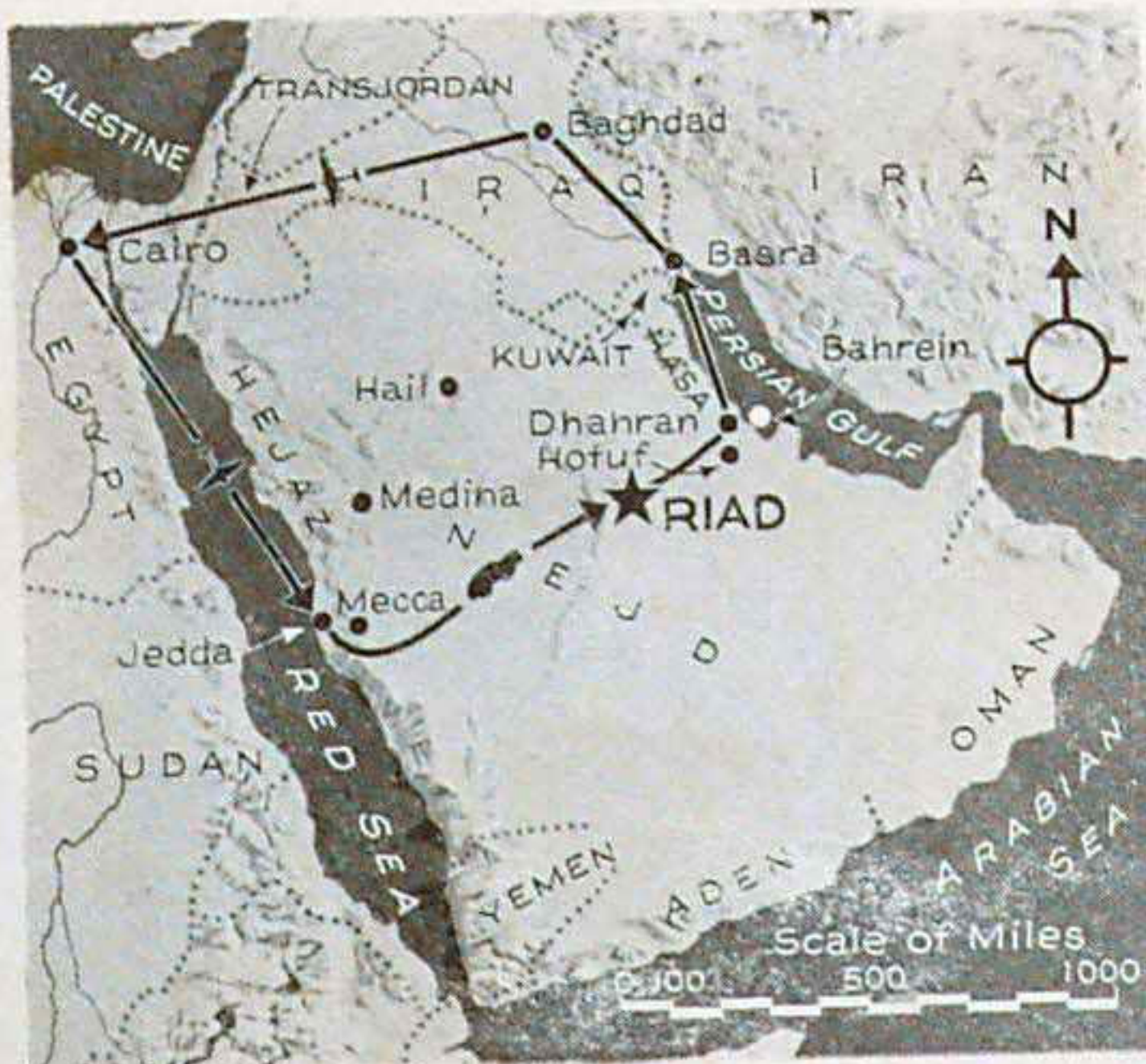
"The first night we shook the battery out of the Nash. The next day the truck broke down (we later learned that, after getting started again,

it capsized, killing two and injuring the rest of its occupants) and we went on alone. The third day we got stuck in a stream bed swollen by the first rain in two years. The water rose to the level of the seat but it seemed wiser to stay there all night anyway rather than risk pneumonia by getting out and sitting on the bank. The fourth and fifth days were spent marooned in a mud-hut storeroom in a deserted Arab village from which we dispatched

a runner to the King, explaining our predicament. The sixth day was spent in covering the last 50 miles of the 600-mile journey in the King's relief expedition."

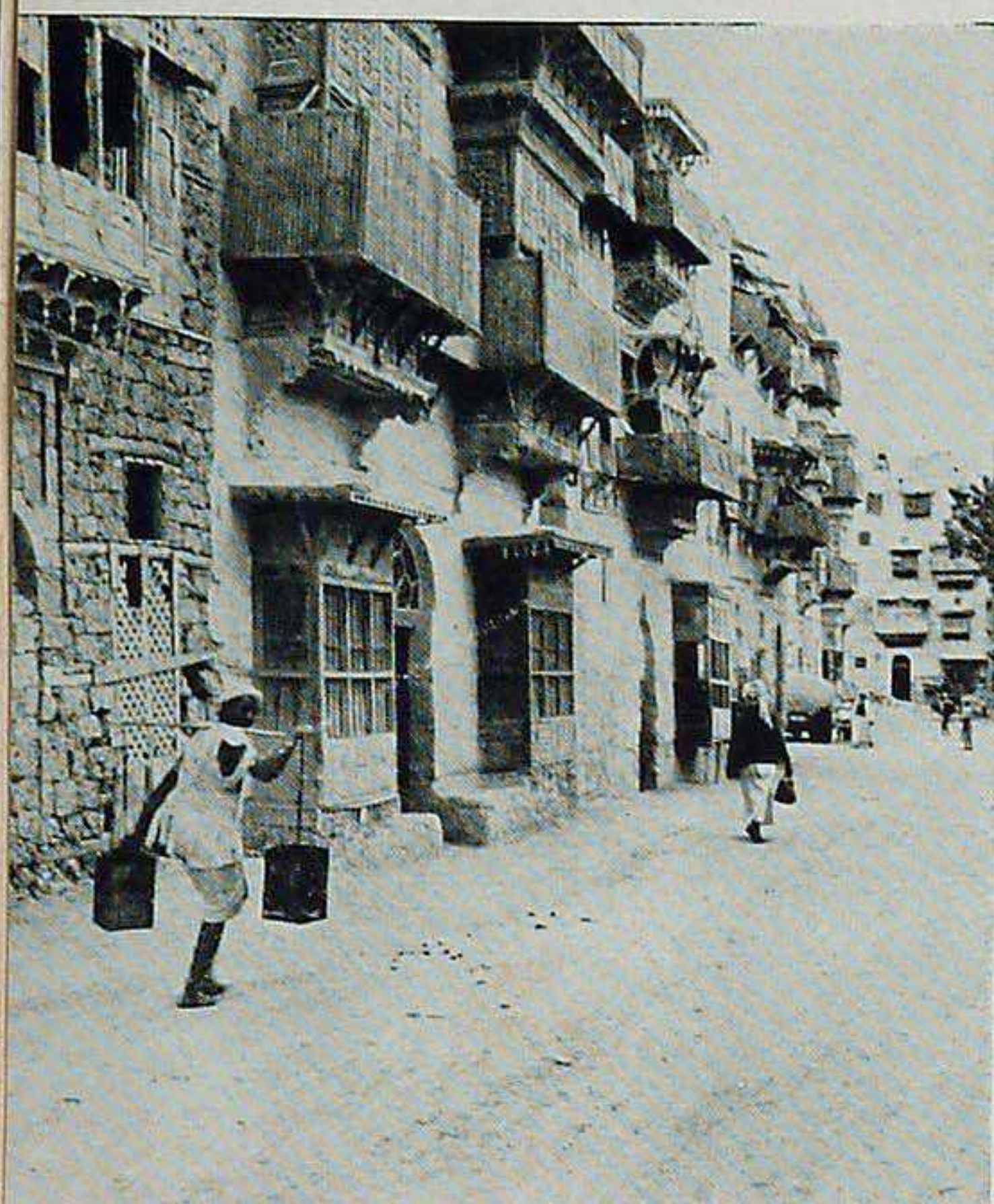
In Riad, Busch and Landry wore Arab costume so as not to arouse the natives. They had the pleasure of seeing Ibn Saud three times (*above*) and His Majesty gave Mr. Busch a formal interview (*see pages 76-77*). LIFE's representatives were housed in the palace of the Crown Prince who was off hunting at the time. After five days at Riad and at El Kharj plantation, 54 miles south, Busch and Landry proceeded to Dhahran, east coast camp of the California Arabian Standard Oil Co., whence they flew back to Cairo via Basra and Baghdad. "The trip," reports Mr. Busch, "was interesting but uncomfortable."

Busch and Landry brought out the first complete journalistic account of this remarkable country and its ruler which LIFE presents in photographs and words on the following 14 pages.



LIFE expedition route is shown by arrowed line. Mecca and Medina are two forbidden Holy Cities, Dhahran an oil town.

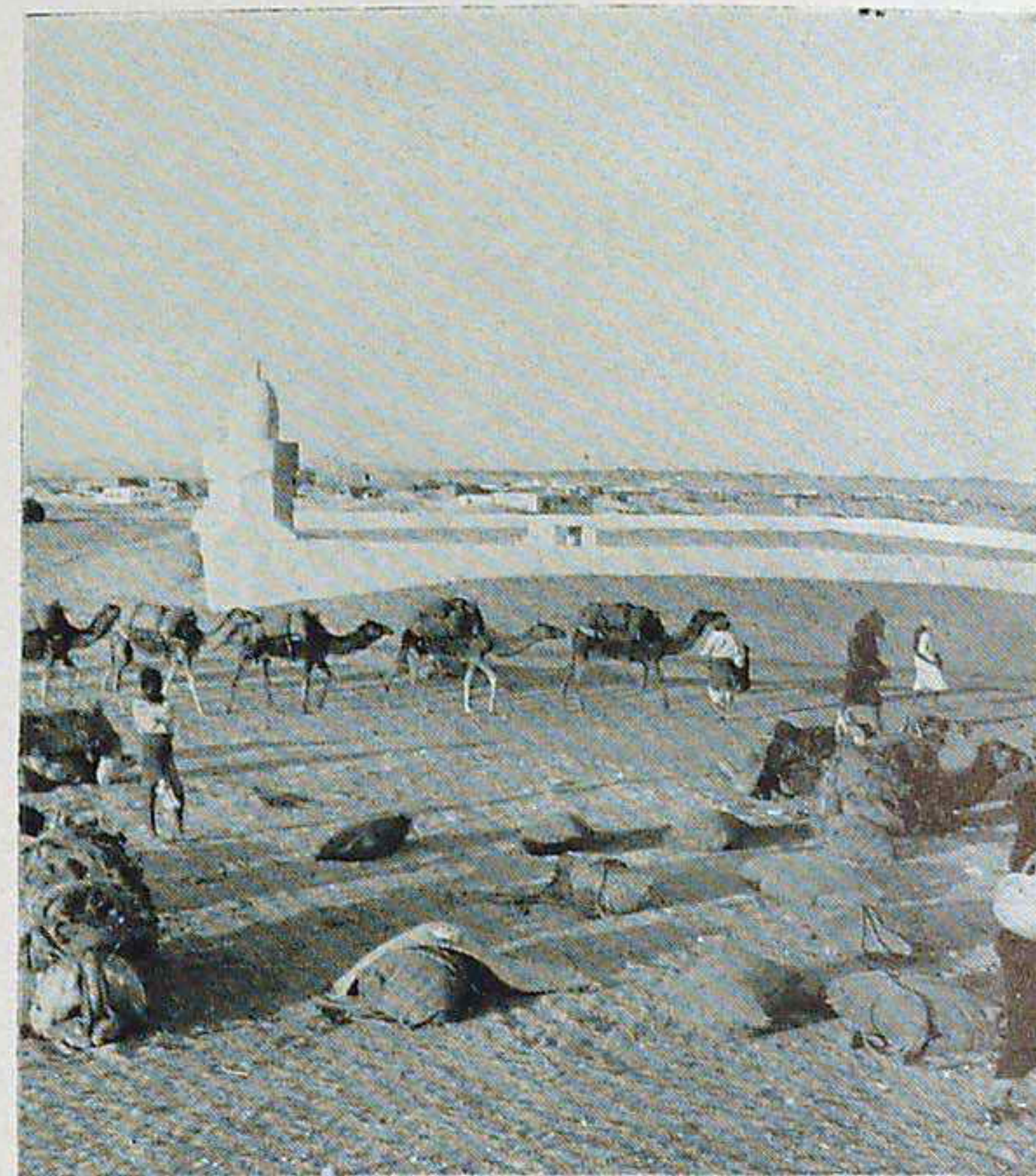
JEDDA TO RIAD: A 600-MILE TRIP INTO ARABIA



At Jeddah, city of many peoples on the coast, expedition starts. Notice the water carrier's gasoline cans.



Biggest Christian cemetery in Arabia is at Jeddah. Before, Wahhabis threw Christian bodies into Red Sea, still resent carved images.



Eve's Tomb at Jeddah, now closed as a hoax, was a minor attraction for pilgrims. For a small price one could touch the navel of stone Eve.



Caravan consisted of Nash and truck (rear) on which rode 14 Arabs, three sheep and a flock of chickens.



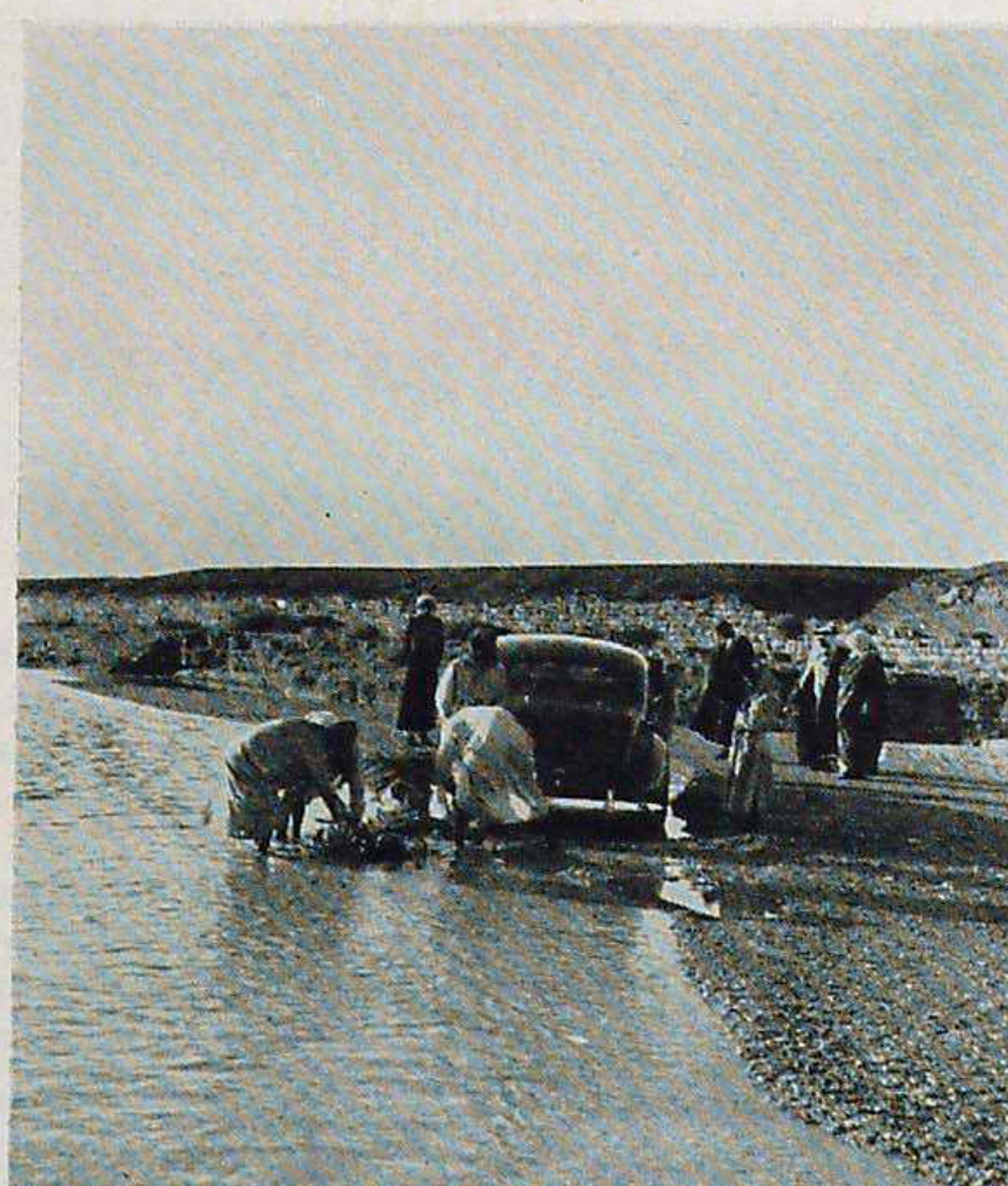
Guide (later killed when truck overturned) makes coffee, drunk weak and spiced in small white cup (right), chased with sweet tea.



A welcome well, deepened, cemented and covered by King Ibn Saud, is passed by the Busch-Landry expedition on the journey to Riad.



Arab prisoners, chained together, are found at Fort Duwadami. Ibn Saud has almost stamped out crime.



Car got stuck in flooded stream bed on third day. The water rose all night to seat level, but Busch and Landry stuck it out inside.



Marooned at Jubaila, the caravan waits for rescue. Landry (center) boiled eggs and chicken bought from natives. Arab makes pancake.

THE KING OF ARABIA

IBN SAUD, A SELF-MADE MONARCH, RULES A NATION JUST EMERGING FROM THE TIME OF MOHAMMED

by NOEL F. BUSCH

Last autumn when the Packard sedan in which Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, was making his pilgrimage to Mecca blew out a tire, His Majesty got out and sat down in the sand to wait while it was being fixed. While he was waiting a shepherd on a camel rode up and, unaware to whom he was speaking, asked whether the King had gone by. Ibn Saud replied that the King had not passed yet but was expected to do so soon and asked why the shepherd wanted to know.

"I heard that he was on his way to Mecca and want to see if he will give me some money so I can make the pilgrimage too," replied the shepherd, dismounting.

Opening the bag of gold pieces which he keeps about him for emergencies, the King fished out a handful. The shepherd stared at them for a moment and then looked back at the King.

"Thanks, Abdul Aziz," he said, "I did not recognize your face but I know you by your generosity."

Ibn Saud's encounter with the shepherd is typical not only of the King but also of his country. While Arabia is about half the size of Europe, or four times the size of Texas, it differs from these portions of the globe in many particulars. Arabia, for instance, does not enjoy the somewhat dubious blessings of the cinema nor even of a popular press, free or otherwise. Consequently, Ibn Saud's face is not much more familiar to his subjects than was, for example, King Alfred's face to his. In calling the King by his first name, which is just about equivalent to calling President Roosevelt "Franklin," the shepherd was also behaving conventionally. Ibn Saud is an absolute monarch, the most important one now alive. Consequently there is, in his case, no need for the elaborate facade of ceremony which in constitutional monarchies disguises the absence of that authority which it once enhanced. Indeed, the fact that the King can have peoples' heads cut off whenever it seems advisable tends to put him on a certain footing of otherwise unobtainable intimacy with his subjects, who feel free not only to call him by his first name but also to find fault with him when he annoys them. Ibn Saud combines the functions which, in forms of popular government more involved than the old-fashioned kingdom, are divided up among such dignitaries as president, chief justice, prime minister, secretary of the treasury, archbishop, generalissimo, petty magistrate, executive assistant, and ward leader. Accessible to practically everyone all the time, he receives large numbers of his subjects every day in the throne room of his palace at Riad which he uses not as a place to hold levees and pageants, but simply as his office.

In appearance the throne room compares favorably with that of old King Cole in the convivial painting. Since smoking, drinking and playing musical instruments are forbidden to the Wahhabis (or "Puritan" Moslems), the riotous personnel are missing from the foreground and the furniture is more functional. The floor is covered with fine Persian carpets. Stiff armchairs, made to order in Cairo, line the walls. In these, in an alcove to His Majesty's right where they can chat among themselves but still be within ear-

shot in case he needs them, sit most of the important courtiers and some of the King's older sons. There is a telephone on the table beside the King's comfortable throne and an electric buzzer attached to its right leg. Instead of a crown, Ibn Saud wears gold-wrapped camel's-hair head-ropes and a cloak of homespun camel's hair with gold stitching. At 63, he walks a little slowly, partly because of old sword and bullet wounds, but gives the impression nonetheless of being younger than his years. This is due in part to his deep voice, responsive manner and quick, expressive gestures. It is also due partly perhaps to the fact that he belongs to a younger world.

For, rated on a scale of accomplishment—that of assembling the biggest Arabian kingdom since the time of Mohammed, 1,300 years ago—Ibn Saud certainly ranks with the major figures of his time. Yet it is difficult to compare his achievements with theirs for several reasons. One is that defective communications of the kind that caused the shepherd's failure to recognize the King, projected on a larger scale, have prevented knowledge about the King of Arabia from reaching the world outside Arabia except as a distant and improbable legend. Another is that in this very absence of communication lies the essential nature of Ibn Saud and his country. The Arab world generally—comprising most of the population of North Africa from Morocco to Egypt, and the entire Near East—has never until recently concerned itself much with European progress. Arabia itself—or Saudi Arabia as it is called on most maps to distinguish it from other crannies like Yemen, Aden, Oman and Kuwait on the great subcontinent—contains the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. Thus shut off from Europeans by the religion of its inhabitants as well as by the accident of geography and the logic of events, it has preserved alive, secret and intact, a segment of time itself.

The world's ignorance about Ibn Saud and his country is currently in directly inverse ratio to their consequence. Arabia's new practical impor-

tance to the world is based on sound strategic, economic and religious grounds. Its location alone, which commands two of the three available sea routes to the Near East, obviously makes it an essential factor in United Nations plans for supplying Russia and India as well as the Near East. Furthermore, it is no military secret that both the Persian Gulf island of Bahrein and the Arabian mainland are major filling stations for oil which is carried to United Nations forces by pipeline or tanker. To the post-war world, Arabia's oil may have an economic value even greater than its strategic value at present. The Arabian fields, to which the California Arabian Standard Oil Company a few years ago took out a 60-year, 250,000-square-mile concession, appear relatively inexhaustible.

Politically as well as religiously, Ibn Saud and his Arabia concern the U. S. even more closely. By the Atlantic Charter, which appears much less vague to most Arabs than it does to most Americans, the U. S. is committed to benevolent intercession in world affairs generally. By the presence of General Eisenhower in North Africa, the U. S. seems, to Arabs at least, committed to benevolent interest in Arab affairs particularly. Ibn Saud, as absolute monarch of the most powerful Arab nation, is the top personage in the Arab world. His possession of the Holy Cities, moreover, makes him not only No. 1 among the 30,000,000 Arabs of the Near East, but also No. 1 among the 220,000,000 Moslems scattered throughout the world.

In World War II, as in World War I, which preceded his possession of the Holy Cities, Ibn Saud has preserved a benevolent neutrality. This was fortunate for the British. If before the war Ibn Saud had fallen in with the Axis, which spared no effort to persuade him to do so, it might have proved difficult, if not impossible, to eject the Italians from Ethiopia and Eritrea. If Ibn Saud had wavered a year ago, the pro-Axis revolt in Iraq, which later turned out to be the preface to Iraq's entry into the war on the United Nations' side, might have had very different consequences.

Ibn Saud's faith in and support of the United Nations took courage as well as perspicacity when Rommel was in the suburbs of Alexandria nearly a year ago. It has turned out well for all concerned. Currently he is enjoying not only the gratitude of the U. S. and England, tangibly expressed in shipments of gold, grain and lend-lease vehicles, but also of his own subjects who, in return for the boundless power accorded him, expect their King to show almost infallible judgment at all times, and to enjoy the fruits of it.

Arabia under Ibn Saud has of course not yet approximated the material prosperity or cultural development of most European, or even of most Asiatic, nations, partly because Moslems in general and central Arabian Moslems in particular are inclined to be distrustful of such blessings. In conferring upon his subjects, for example, the convenience of the radio, Ibn Saud was handicapped by the fact that many of them considered this implement to be the work of a djinn or demon. Had the King been so misguided as to let the



King Ibn Saud, 63, has the fine head of an Old Testament patriarch, the hooded eyes of an Arab warrior and granite face of a Moslem fundamentalist.



A handful of his sons pose with the King. The two tallest are Nasir and Mansour, Emir of Muraba Palace, where the picture

was taken. The resemblance of all to Ibn Saud is notable, but most had different mothers. There are some 25 other children.

IBN SAUD (continued)

Congress of holy men who advise him on such matters tune in on an ordinary U. S. program, they would have felt that their case was proved on prima-facie evidence. Fundamentalist Moslems, who form the backbone of the country, regard even hymns as sacrilegious and would not credit Satan himself with permitting a woman to sing torch songs for public consumption. The King made no such mistake. Instead, aware that Moslems believe it is impossible for any djinn to utter the word of God, he arranged a broadcast of readings from the Koran itself and asked the holy men to attend. After hearing the broadcast, the holy men agreed without much argument that the device must be mortal rather than supernatural and therefore not inherently wicked.

Arab warriors are not much impressed by such

implements as airplanes. These of course are scarce, since to allow non-Moslems to fly across the country might result in one of them seeing the Holy Cities, but from time to time a plane does land there with interesting consequences. Not long ago, a flier, spying one of the few gas pumps in the desert, came down to refuel. The Bedouin who filled his tank thought little of the phenomenon, merely reporting later that one of the cars that had stopped that day had driven off through the air instead of along the ground.

A few years ago the U. S. State Department recognized Ibn Saud's increased eminence by accrediting Alexander Kirk, U. S. Minister to Egypt, as Minister to Saudi Arabia also. Kirk's first official visit to the King last year necessitated the installation of an airport not far from Riad. This work was entrusted to one of the engineers of the California Arabian Standard Oil Company who,



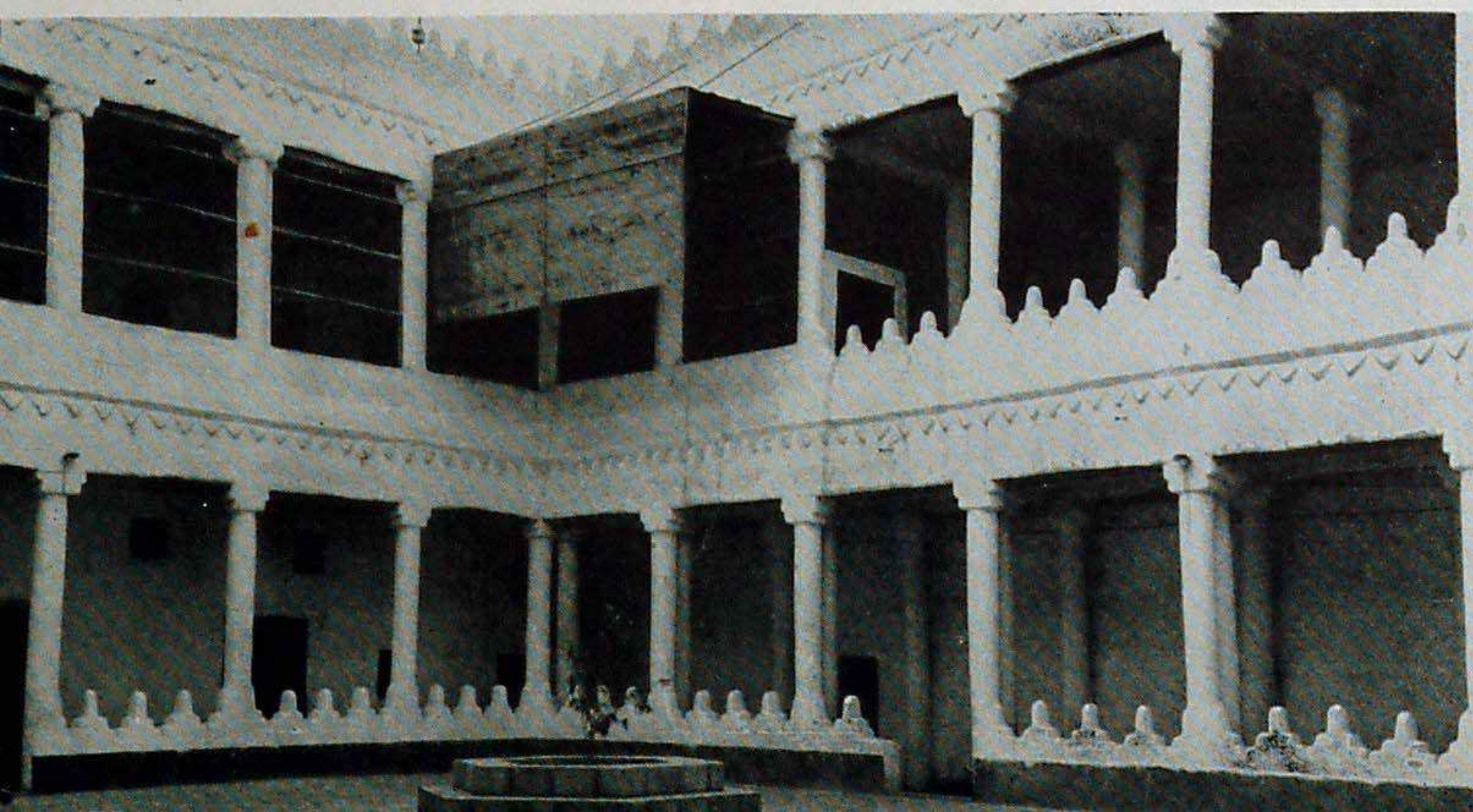
The King's palace, less than a mile outside of Riad, is called Muraba (meaning square) and is by far the most impressive thing

when he had marked out landing lanes on the desert, sat down beside a field radio to guide the pilot in. A crowd of Bedouins gathered and one, from the interior, asked what the little box was saying. The engineer answered that the box told him that a large bird carrying several men in it would presently descend from the sky and disgorge them. Skeptical, the Bedouin asked when this marvel could be expected to occur. "In about an hour and a half," the engineer replied. When the plane appeared, the engineer expected the Bedouin to regard it as a sort of double miracle but he was sharply disillusioned. Pointing to the American's watch, the Bedouin remarked in a somewhat critical tone that the bird was ten minutes ahead of time.

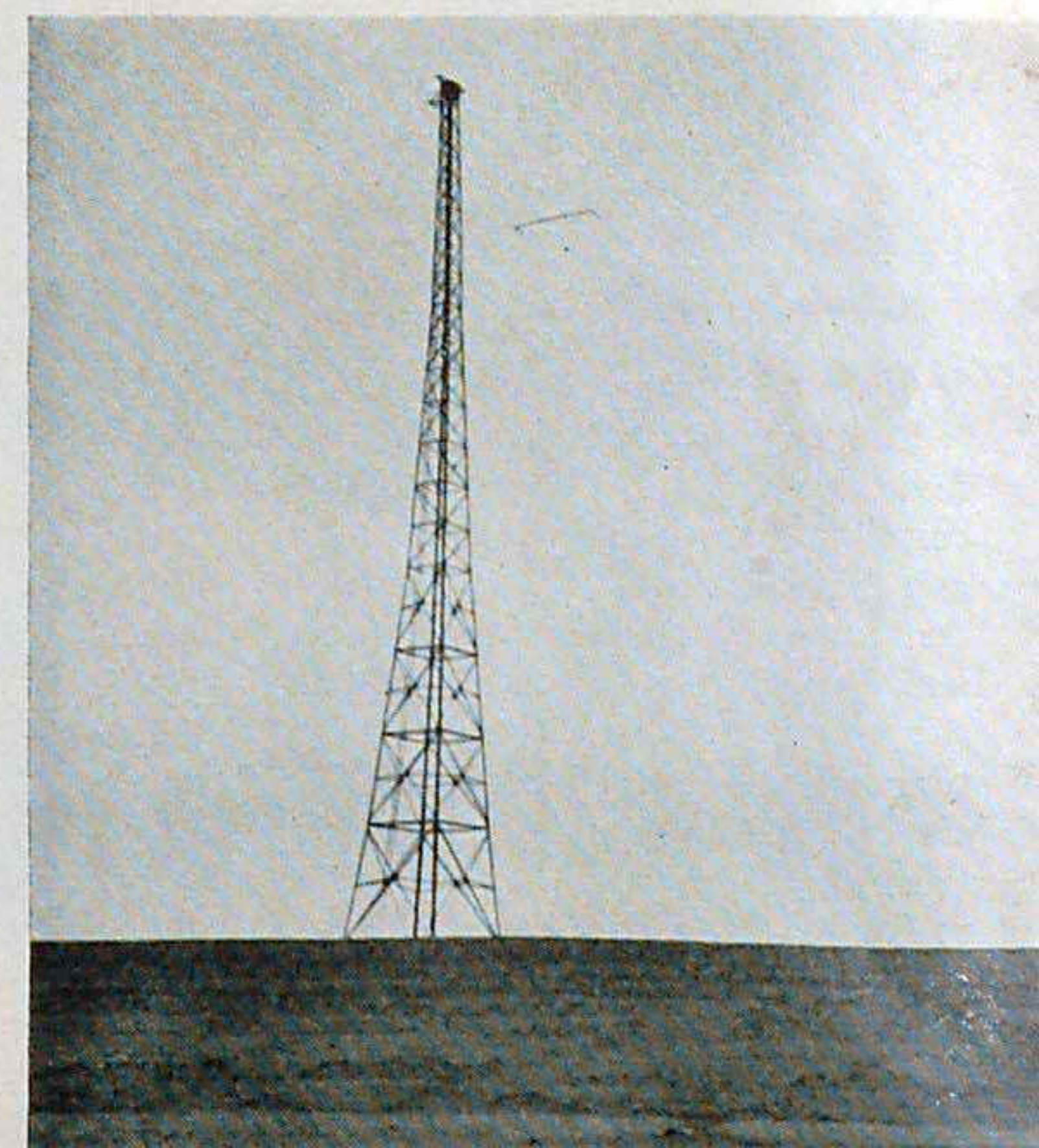
Kirk's visit to Riad lasted a week or so and gave the State Department its first inkling of the way the wheels go around in a capital which has to

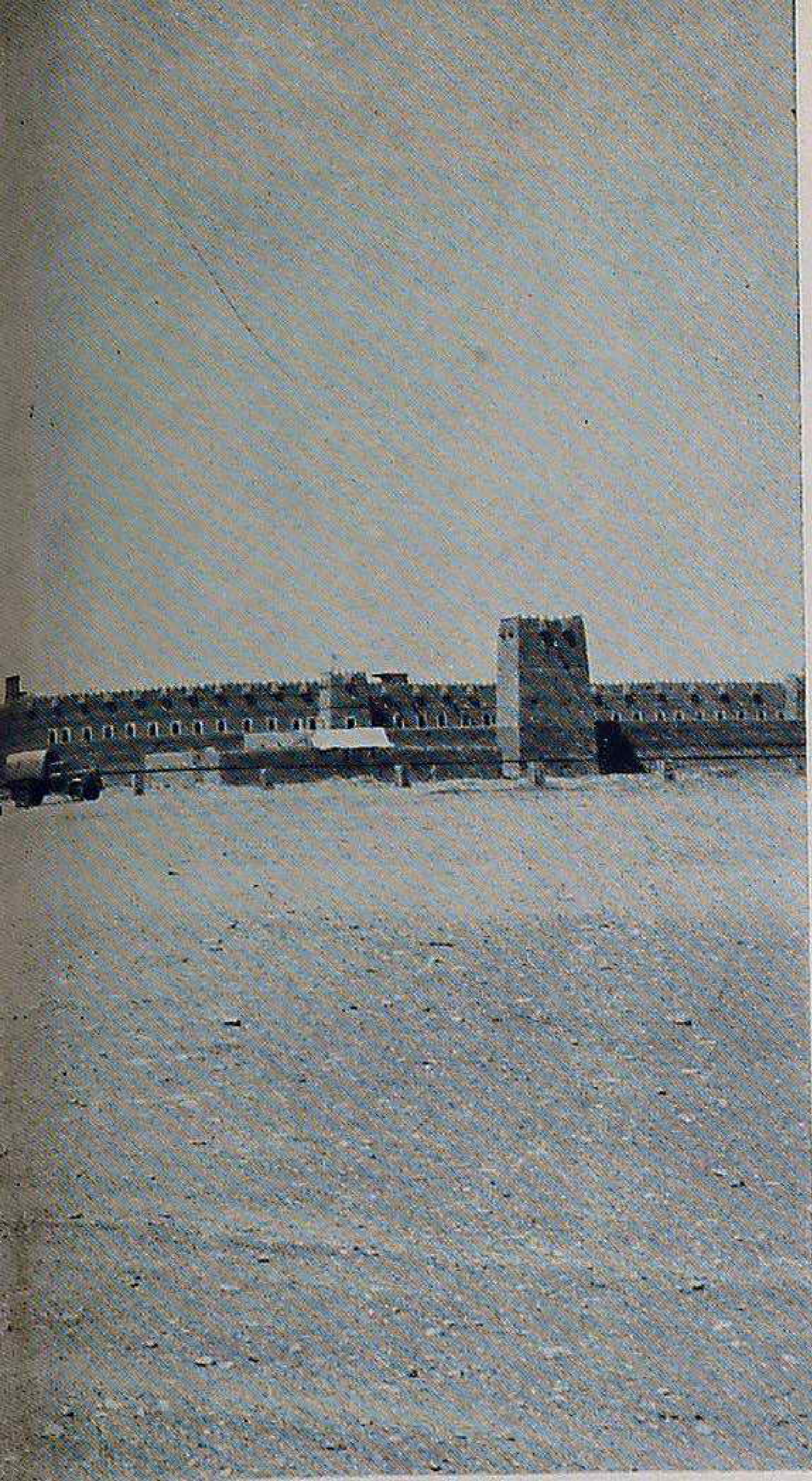
The palace courtyard at Riad shows at the left the barred women's quarters of Ibn Saud's harem, shaded by black blinds. To

the right on the second floor are the throne room and reception hall where Busch had his three interviews with the King.



The King's radio station rises in Riad above the stone battlements of the walled town, through whose gate comes a donkey

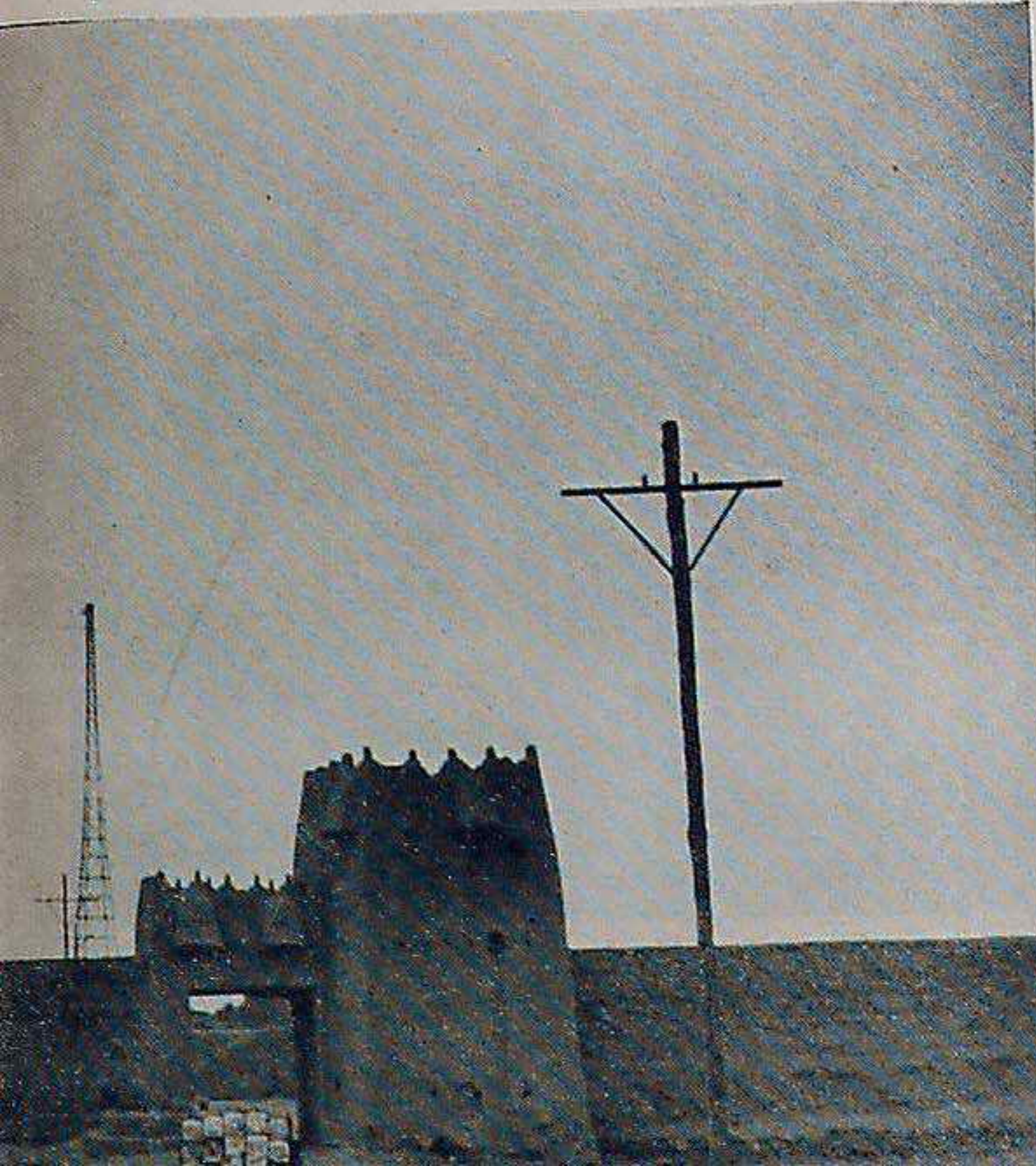




in the capital. In Arabia, where even breathing is hot and oppressive, the idea in building a palace is to get it dark and cool.

date been visited by fewer than 100 Europeans. Easily the most carefully dressed diplomat in the U. S. foreign service, Kirk, who usually wears gray suits set off by gray ties, gray shirts and gray shoes, was somewhat disheartened to find that Arab costume, advisable for all visitors to the city, comes only in brown, black and cream. Recovering from this jolt and properly attired in black cloak and cashmere headdress, he enjoyed his stay immensely. A gourmet as well as a fashion plate, Kirk took special pleasure in Arab dinners, which consist of tender young sheep roasted whole, placed on a two-foot pile of rice, surrounded by dishes of spicy vegetables. The Minister, who has three residences in Cairo, and the King, who has some dozen palaces, found an immediate bond in their mutual interest in private housing and discussed this, as well as more weighty matters, through an interpreter. On the Minister's de-

loaded down with water cans. Ibn Saud has brought radio, telephone, electricity and automobile to kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



His second son Feisal, 38, is Emir of the Hejaz on the coast. Here he sits amid the Louis XIV furnishings of his palace at Jed-

da. Busch and Landry stayed in eldest son Saud's Riad palace. While they were there, he was away on a hunting expedition.

parture, the King presented him with a handsome gold-handled sword together with a set of Arab robes. The Minister reciprocated by presenting his Majesty with a portable radio and a Garand rifle.

In coping with the incongruities inherent in running a country like Arabia, Ibn Saud has had several advantages. One was the advantage of being a self-made man on a heroic scale. Born into Arabia's royal family, he was reared in impoverished exile and educated in the school of hard knocks, of which he gave the majority, mostly with a sword. Another advantage was the chance whereby his career coincided with a period in history when intensification of the world's communications tended to crystallize his conquests at the moment he achieved them.

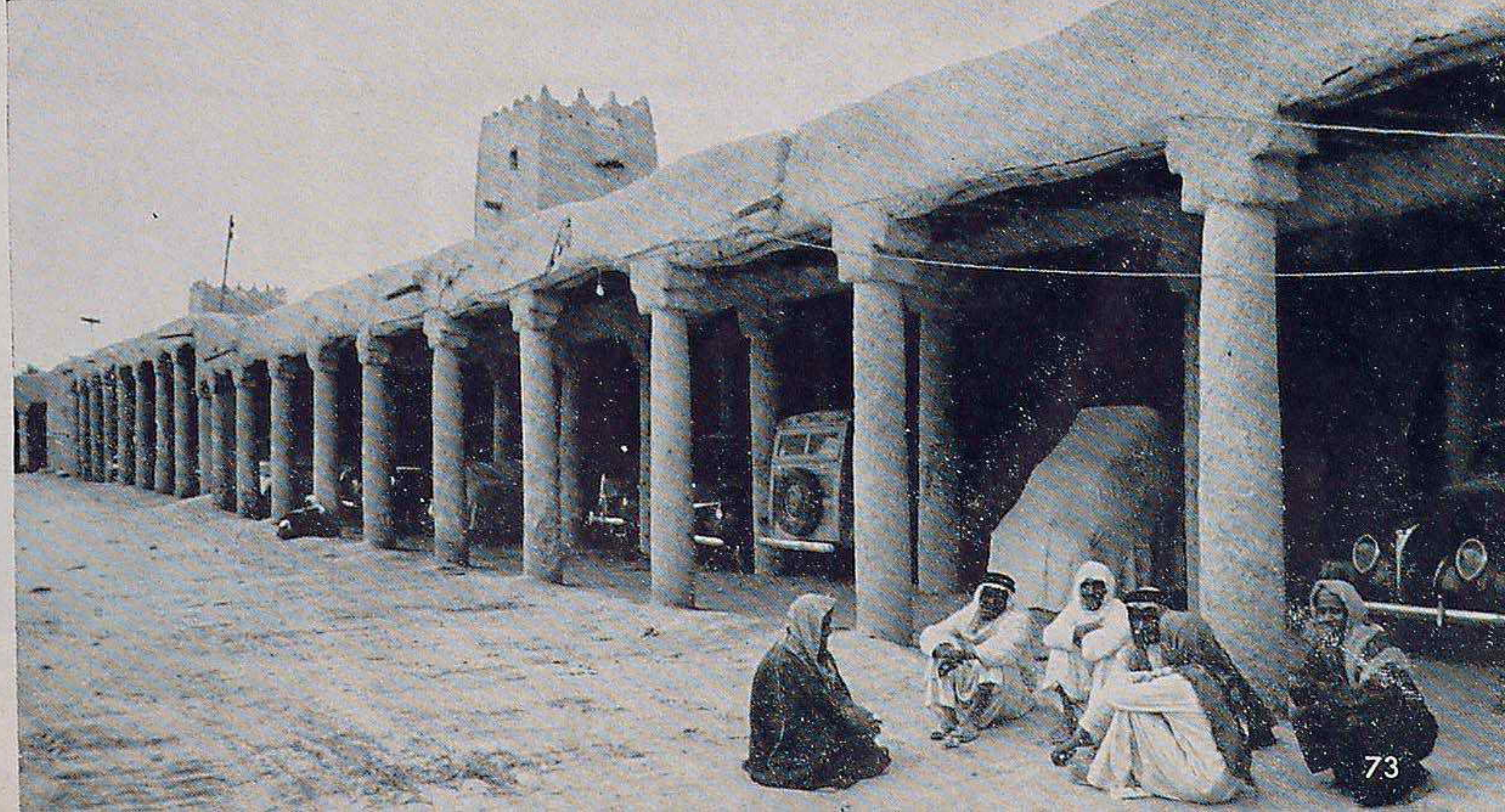
In 1880, when Ibn Saud was born, Arabia was nominally part of the Turkish Empire. Actually

the great square desert was independent not only in space but also in time, walled away from the whole world like a parchment page sealed in a continental cornerstone. On the bright, windy plains of Arabia, and in the dark alleys of its walled towns, warriors fought their secret wars, using swords or lances and shouting battle cries which Europe had not heard since the Crusades. In one of these wars, Ibn Saud's great-great-grandfather conquered most of the peninsula. By 1880 the first Saud's holdings had been whittled down to nothing, chiefly by a family named Rashid. Abdul Aziz ("Servant of the Mighty One") was born and spent his childhood in the capital city of Riad, then ruled by a Bedouin chief, Ibn Rashid. Before he was 10, the whole Saudi clan was driven into exile by the Rashids. Abdul Aziz's father, a mild, devout but bitterly determined individual, spent the next ten years drill-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

The King's garage at Riad is a huge 2-acre parking lot, which is surrounded by covered colonnades (*below*). There are a couple of

hundred cars here and a huge staff of mechanics. Visible are some Fords and a Studebaker. Chauffeurs squat in foreground.



IBN SAUD (continued)

ing into his son's head the idea that it was his destiny not only to eject the Rashids from Riad but also to reconquer all the territory once held by his forefathers, including Mecca and Medina. Ibn Saud learned the lesson thoroughly.

Beyond a definition of his mission, the education acquired by the prince was more occupational than academic. Arabs have profound respect for hospitality and elaborate rules concerning it. According to these rules, the Saudis were more or less entitled to board and lodging at the establishments of various desert chieftains who had been beneficiaries or allies of the family previously. Ibn Saud's father and his menage utilized this convention thoroughly, putting up for a time with the Sheik of Bahrein and then with some desert tribes who lived on the fringe of the great southern sand waste. They wound up in Kuwait, an independent pearl-diving city at the head of the Persian Gulf, run by a sheik whose brother became Ibn Saud's best friend. By this time Ibn Saud, who was 21 years old, had learned to read and write, grown 6 ft. 4 in. tall, married his first wife and was eager to start his life work. An early attempt of his father to recapture Riad with a party of Bedouins and a few dozen mangy camels was a failure. But his son decided to try again.

How he conquered his capital

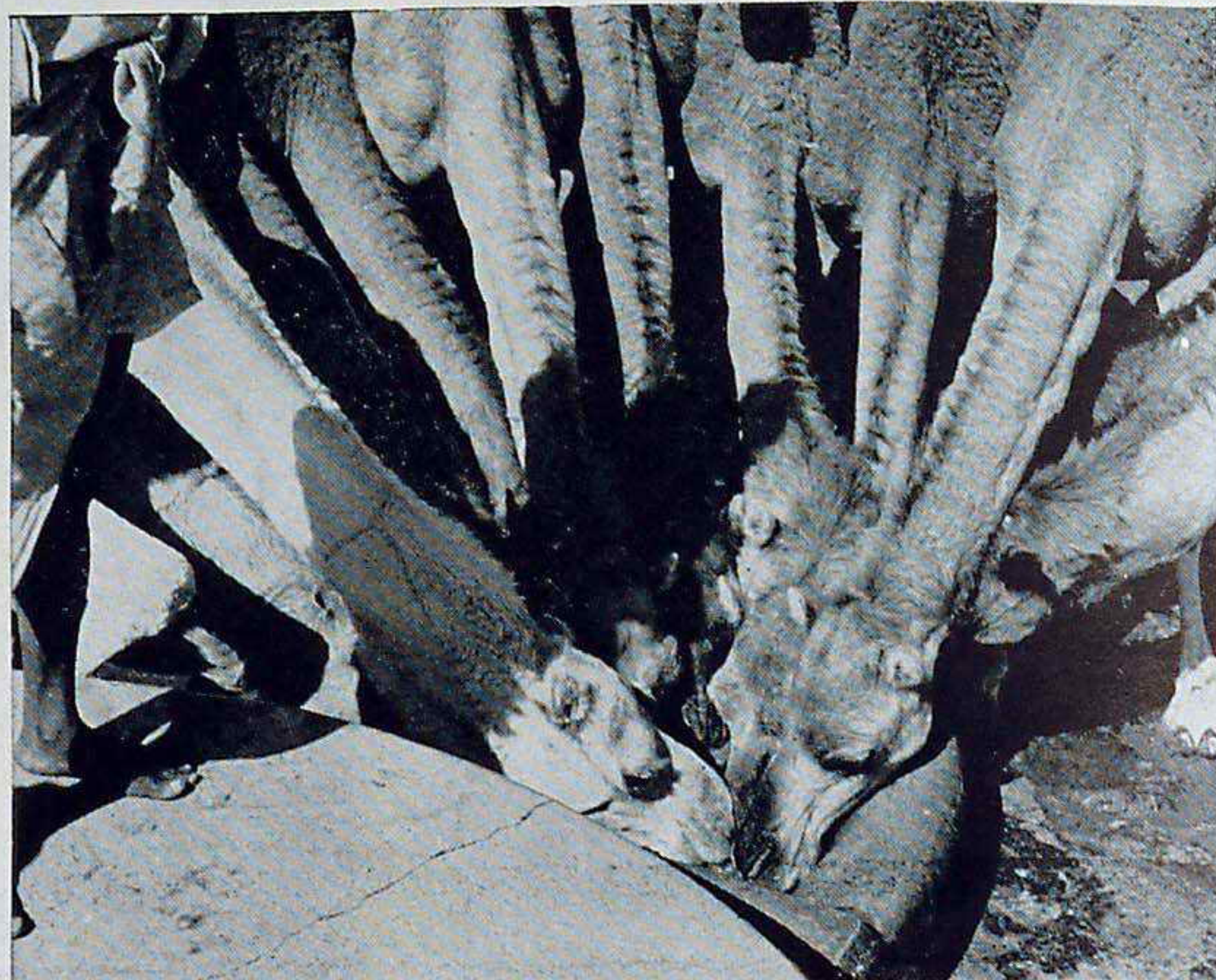
Ibn Saud's assault on Riad, four months after McKinley was assassinated at Buffalo, N. Y., was almost as miraculous as Joshua's investment of Jericho. Like that famous siege, it showed a mature knowledge of the tactical advantages of surprise and good communications. Aware that the Rashids had desert scouts scouring the country for him, Ibn Saud eluded them by riding fast and arriving at the outskirts of Riad before the rumor of his arrival reached the town. Leaving his camels in a grove five miles from the gate, he took 40 men with him at night to the outskirts of the town. There they cut down a date palm tree to use as a ladder. Ibn Saud, taking with him his cousin and eight other members of the party, carried the palm tree to the city's low mud wall. Choosing a quiet spot near the cemetery, they scrambled over it and went to the house of an old family servant, from the roof of which they could reach the roof of the house of the Rashid governor. Entering this they found the governor away but learned from his wife that he would be back early the next morning.

Ibn Saud and his men stayed hidden in the house all night. The next morning, when the governor entered the courtyard below, Ibn Saud and his party rushed him. The governor's guard tried to form around their master but were soon cut down. Ibn Saud's cousin killed the governor. During the commotion the rest of Ibn Saud's men entered Riad through the main gate. By noon the Rashid garrison of 80 men had been killed or made prisoner and Ibn Saud had proclaimed himself master of the town.

Viewed in retrospect, Ibn Saud's incredibly bold ten-man seizure of Riad was the crucial moment in his career. Had it failed, he would certainly have been killed, captured or permanently thwarted. Once it succeeded, in view of his capabilities, all his later triumphs became more or less inevitable. At the time, however, the Rashids regarded the exploit as merely an outrageous bit of adolescent impudence. Concerned with bigger wars elsewhere, and also with squabbling among themselves, they decided to give Ibn Saud time to gather all his family and friends around him and then to exterminate the whole swarm at once. Ibn Saud gathered not only his family and friends but also an army. When the Rashids finally attacked, he gave them a resounding beating. The Rashids retreated to their own capital of Hail, still powerful enough to spend the next 15 years raising more armies and making further efforts to eject the Saudis. By this time, however, it was too late. During World War I, in which the Rashids sided with the Turks, their rule was finally ended and in 1921 Ibn Saud took the remnants of the family captive. An extravagant believer in the Arab principle of generosity toward a defeated rival, he moved them into his own capital where they are still living. Rashid princes go to the school which Ibn Saud maintains for his own sons and grandsons and race their horses against young Saudis. However, while Saudis may marry Rashid girls, Rashids may not marry Saud girls.

Arabia has three main areas. Ibn Saud's gradual conquest of Rashid territory gave him control of the central one, called Nejd. In order to reassemble the kingdom of his forefathers, he still had to take the remaining two: Hasa, on the east coast, and Hejaz, on the west. Hasa was controlled by the Turks through a small garrison at its capital, Hofuf. Italy's invasion of Tripoli and interior troubles elsewhere in the huge, worm-eaten Turkish Empire, gave Ibn Saud the chance he wanted. Using again his favorite trick of complete surprise, he marched on Hofuf with 700 picked camel cavalymen who crossed the moat, scaled the wall, killed the sentries, stormed the main fort and had the governor and his army cornered in a mosque within six hours. Ibn Saud sent the governor a memorandum to the effect that, unless he came out at once, he would mine the mosque and blow it up together with its contents. The governor and his garrison emerged, marched down to the coast and got on a boat for home. The conquest of Hasa came at an opportune moment—early in 1914. Before the Turks could avenge their loss, they were involved in World War I.

Ibn Saud's conquest of Hasa put him on the international scene because of Germany's pre-war efforts to establish a Berlin-to-Bagdad railway and Eng-



The camel really rules Arabia. Its hair makes the Arab's robes, its milk is his food, its dung is his fuel and its back is his transport. It eats camel's-thorn, costs \$15 to \$150 and loves its work.



Arab graveyard at Riad has no carved headstones for the "Puritan" Wahhabis abhor them. When Ibn Saud first captured Riad he tethered his horses in palm grove (rear), crossed this graveyard.



Falcons are used by the King to spot gazelles on the wide desert where a dog would obviously be useless. They cannot kill the game but they mark it for the Arab hunters and attack its eyes.



Main street of Riad. This is the city market place, and on the lamppost in background the heads of beheaded criminals are suspended for some days as an example. The beheading would take place

here too. Photographer Landry got permission from the King to photograph the streets of Riad only one day at 5:30, was not allowed to get out of the car for fear Wahhabis might assault him.



Under the palace walls in the cool of late afternoon, the moving columns of black clothing are Arab women, perpetually veiled in public. In Arabia adultery is, of course, punished by death for

both man and woman, and a woman's main field of activity is the harem. The mass of loose clothing worn by the desert Arabs is really the only way to keep relatively cool in this awful heat.

IBN SAUD'S FIRST PRONOUNCEMENT ON THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

المملكة العربية السعودية
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
١٣٦ هـ

حديث جلالة الملك
مع مندوب مجلة ليف السترونج
في الرياض بتاريخ ٢١ مارس ١٩١٥

س - ما رأي جلالتكم في مسألة فلسطين ؟

ج - ان رأيي في مسألة فلسطين لم اعلنه حتى الآن الى العرب وذلك تحاشيا من ان اضعهم في موقف حسن في هذه الآفة مع الحلفاء - ولكن بنسبة زيارتكم لنا وموجب انكم من اعدائنا احب ان نطلعكم على ما نرى لاجل بياننا للشعب الأمريكي الصديق ليهم الحقيقة -

اولا - انني لاعلم ان لليهود امرا يبرهنون انهم في فلسطين لأن فلسطين كانت من قبل البعثة الحمديّة بقرين لبني اسرائيل وقد تسلط عليهم الرومان في ذلك الوقت وقتلواهم وقتلواهم ولم يبق انزل حكمهم فيها والعرب قد استولت عليها وانتهكها من الرومان منذ الف وثلاثمائة سنة وكسروها من ذلك الوقت بيد المسلمين بين هذا يجران ليس لليهود حق في دواهم هذه لأن جميع بلدان العالم تطلب عليها شعوب تلكها وصارت الآن وطننا لهم لاشارة فيه فلواردا تعقيب نظرية اليهود لوجب

المملكة العربية السعودية
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
١٣٦ هـ

(٢)

على كثير من شعوب العالم المستقر ان يرحل من بلادهم وطعن من سن هذه البلاد ثانيا - انني لم اشر من اليهود ومن ان تكون لهم دولة وسلطة في بلاد العرب ولا في غيرها بموجب ما اخبرنا به الربى سبحانه وتعالى من ان رسله في كتابه الكريم تأرد ان تثبت اليهود في هذه البلاد من الخطأ - اولاً لأنه ظلم للعرب والمسلمين عربا ثانياً انه يورث الفتن والفتن بين المسلمين وأعدائهم الحلفاء وهذا نبي لاريد ان اشد به - ثم بعد ذلك اذا كان اليهود مضطرين الى رحل يكونه بلاد اوروبا وامريكا وغيرها من البلدان اوسع واخص من هذه البلاد وانتم لمعالجهم وهذا هو الاصل ولا فائدة في ادخال الحلفاء والمسلمين في مشكلة ليس من ورائها طائل - اما سكان فلسطين القدماء من اليهود فمن رأيي ان تنفق العرب من اعدائنا لحلف حالهم على شرط ان لا تعمل اليهود اصلا تحل شمسنا شامية ومن لا تكون في صالح الجميع وان يحطوا سنانا بكافة الحلفاء ان لا يجرأ في شرار اعداء العرب التي هي حياتهم بمالهم من قدرة بالار موال الطائفة لأجل تنفيذ مقاصدهم وهذا صياح وسيرة لأهل فلسطين وسبب لهم الفقر والاضمحلال - ومن الأمور التي تحدث مشكلة ثانية بالنسبة - اما العرب فانهم يحفظونهم حقوقهم اللازمة وشعورهم بها

المملكة العربية السعودية
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
١٣٦ هـ

(٣)

س - ما هو فكر جلالتكم في اتحاد العرب ؟

ج - ان للعرب ليس بينهم خلاف واضح انه بعد الحرب يحصل بينهم اتحاد بمساعدة الحلفاء

رئيس ديوان جلالة الملك
عبد العزيز

In his royal interview at Riad, Mr. Busch asked, and Ibn Saud answered, a question on the No. 1 Arab problem—i. e. the future of the Jewish Homeland in Palestine as promised in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The Arabic transcript, typed from stenographic notes, was later released to

LIFE in Cairo (above). A newsworthy pronouncement by a No. 1 Arab on a world problem, Ibn Saud's statement sets him in direct and personal conflict with world Zionism at a time when the whole Palestine question has been fervently reopened in the American press. Such a drastic state-

IBN SAUD (continued)

land's interests in the Persian Gulf. World War I gave him his chance to attain real importance. When the Turks got in on the German side, the British made an effort to storm the Dardanelles. This failed and the Turks began to threaten Suez. The British then turned to the Arabian peninsula for an ally who would help them organize an Arab revolt against the Turkish Empire and also flank the Turkish move. The ally chosen was King Husain of the Hejaz, whose possession of the Holy Cities then made him the religious kingpin of the Moslem world. Ibn Saud was induced to remain a benevolent neutral, a neat diplomatic feat in itself.

Husain's part in the war, which has been fittingly memorialized by T. E. Lawrence who helped him play it, turned out as the British had planned. When the war ended, a dispute naturally arose as to the rewards to which he was entitled. Husain, under the impression that he was heir to the entire empire which had been taken over from Turkey, began calling himself "King of the Arab Countries."

Ibn Saud, when he heard about Husain's pretensions, was not favorably impressed. He had a long-standing grudge against the King of the Hejaz on several grounds. For one thing, fortified with British funds, Husain had tried to occupy some territory lying along the border between the two kingdoms. For another, fundamentalist Moslems, of whom the Nejd population is chiefly composed, deplored the less rigorous forms of worship practiced in the Hejaz. When Husain made another grab at the strip of disputed territory, Ibn Saud finally gave in to his inclinations and attacked. The war did not last much longer than it took for Husain to gather what were left of the gold sovereigns presented to him by Lawrence and motor from Mecca to his yacht at Jedda. Ibn Saud's soldiers took Mecca without a major battle and Jedda by siege soon afterward. Proclaimed King in 1926, Ibn Saud made his entry into the Holy City in appropriately humble style, wearing pilgrim dress which consists of a pair of towels.

His conquest of the Holy Land, as Moslems call the strip of Arabia that lies along the central Red Sea coast, completed his restoration of the old Saud kingdom. Shortly afterward he undertook his minor war with the Imam Yahya of Yemen, not for reasons of aggrandizement but to teach that some-

what unpredictable monarch a good lesson which Ibn Saud improved by granting a generous peace. By virtue of his other holdings, Ibn Saud was obviously a more appropriate guardian for the Holy Land than its previous protector. His improvements in conditions there, and his achievements in Arabia generally, were soon advertised, if not to the Western World, at least to the four corners of the Moslem World, through the reports of returning pilgrims. Thus since 1926 Ibn Saud has been more or less free to devote himself to the job of consolidating his conquests at home, by means of political, economic and social reforms, and to the even harder job of consolidating his country with the continents that surround it.

First of the Western innovations introduced by Ibn Saud was the automobile. He perceived the military value of motorized troops long before the U. S. Army did so and had put some of his camel cavalry on wheels in the latter days of his desert wars. When the wars were over he used the cars—mostly acquired from an eminent British Arabist and converted Moslem Ford salesman named St. John Philby—for purposes of security, commerce, pleasure and religion, especially the last. By the time Ibn Saud conquered the Hejaz, for example, his father, who had long since abandoned all claims to the kingdom in favor of his son, was too old and infirm to make the pilgrimage by camel. The King had the back seat of an early Fiat sedan made up as a bed in which the old gentleman had the honor of combining devotion with adventure, in the form of the first motor trip on record to Mecca from Riad.

His family travels in 500 cars

While the rest of the population of Arabia, which has never been counted but may be more than four million, still do not own more than a few hundred cars, the King now has a thousand or more. Of these the majority are trucks used chiefly for government business. But His Majesty retains 500 or so to expedite travel for himself and the members of his family. This number is not disproportionate considering the size of the family and Arabian facilities for motoring. As to the former, the King himself has only the four wives permitted him by Moslem law but both he and his many children are connubially diligent. As to the latter, there are no adequate roads across the Arabian desert and few

TRANSLATION

Interview of His Majesty the King with LIFE Magazine's Representative, Mr. Busch
 Riad, March 21, 1943

Q. What is your Majesty's opinion concerning the Palestine problem?

A. I have withheld my opinion concerning the Palestine problem from the Arabs in order to avoid placing them in an embarrassing position with the Allies. But because you are one of our friends, I wish to acquaint you with my opinion so that it can be made known to the friendly American people, so that they may understand the truth of the matter.

First, I know of nothing that justifies the Jewish claims in Palestine. Centuries before the advent of Mohammed, Palestine belonged to the Jews. But the Romans prevailed over them, killed some and dispersed the rest. No trace of their rule remained. Then the Arabs seized Palestine from the Romans, more than thirteen hundred years ago, and it has remained ever since in the possession of the Moslems. This shows that the Jews have no right to their claim, since all the countries of the world saw the succession of different peoples who conquered them. Those countries became their undisputed homelands. Were we to follow the Jewish theory, it would become necessary for many peoples of the world, including those of Palestine, to move out of the lands wherein they settled.

Secondly, I am not afraid of the Jews or of the possibility of their ever having a state or power, either in the land of the Arabs or elsewhere. This is in accordance with what God has revealed unto us through the mouth of His Prophet in His Holy Book. Thus I hold the demands of the Jews upon this land an error; first because it constitutes an injustice against the Arabs, and the Moslems in general; and secondly because it causes dissensions and disturbances between the Moslems and their friends the Allies; and in this I fail to see anything good. Furthermore, if the Jews are impelled to seek a place to live, Europe and America as well as other lands are larger and more fertile than Palestine, and more suitable to their welfare and interests. This would constitute justice, and there is no need to involve the Allies and the Moslems in a problem void of good.

As to the native Jewish population in Palestine, I suggest that the Arabs agree with their friends the Allies to safeguard the interests of those Jews, provided the Jews commit no action that might lead to strife and dissension, which would not be in the general interest, and provided the Jews give a guarantee, endorsed by the Allies, that they would not strive to buy Arab property, and would refrain from using their great financial power for that purpose. Such efforts would only bring to the people of Palestine loss and injury, and poverty and decay to their doors. Such efforts would inevitably lead to more trouble.

On the other hand the Arabs would recognize the rights of the Jews and would guarantee to safeguard them.

Q. What does your Majesty think of Arab unity?

A. There are no differences among the Arabs, and I believe that, with Allied aid, they will be united after the war.

(Signed) Head of The Royal Cabinet

ment will naturally dismay all those who have struggled through the years for some compromise of this most difficult problem. That Ibn Saud's position is disputable historically, economically and religiously will be demonstrated by competent Zionists in the pages of LIFE in a later issue.

garages or mechanics so that mishaps, like the one which occasioned his chat with the shepherd last year, are frequent.

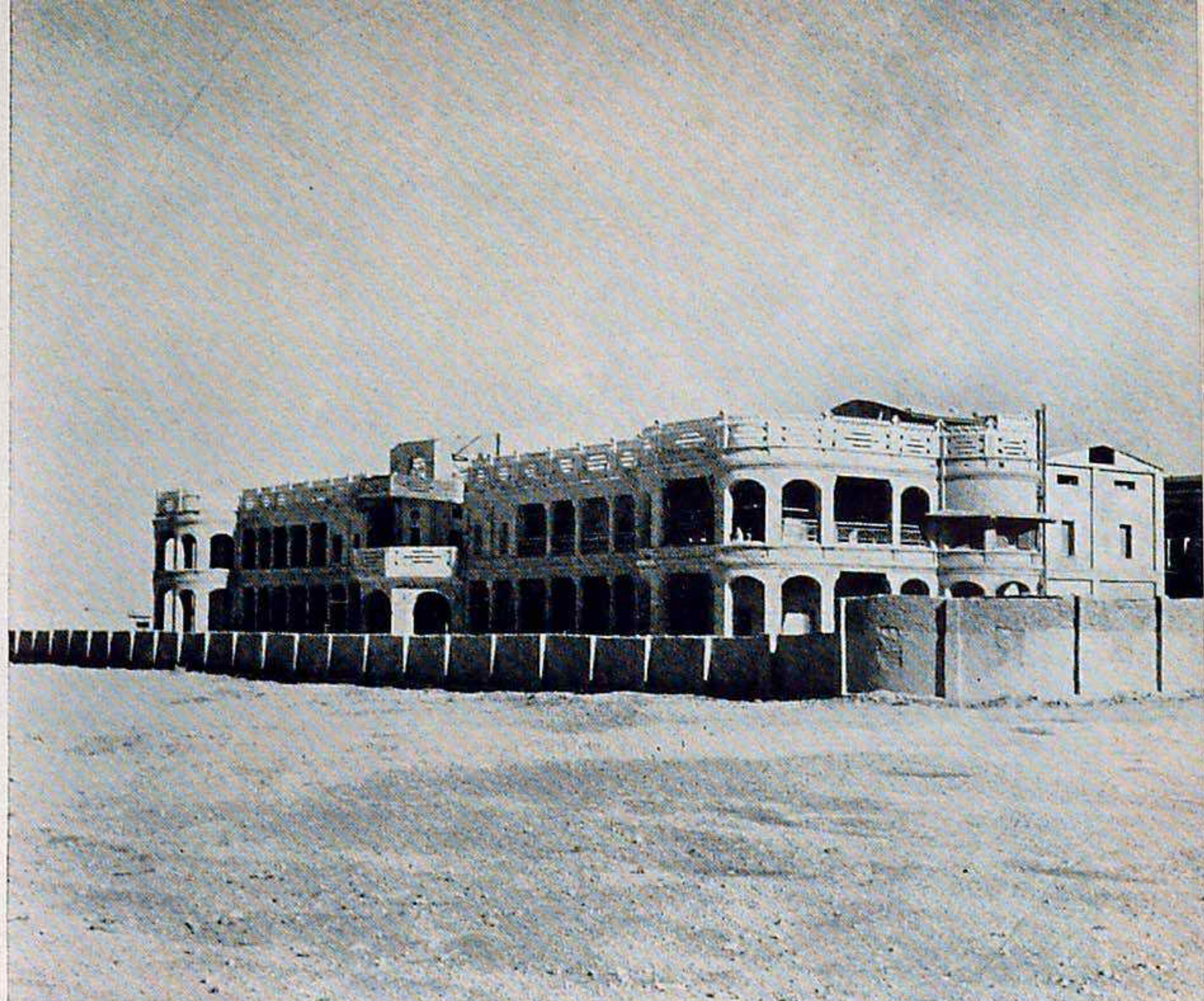
When setting off for Mecca with his family, as the King devoutly does each year, he usually employs a convoy of 500 or so vehicles. His own car, those of his sons, and those of their veiled wives, the latter with the window curtains drawn, head the procession. These are followed by trucks and station wagons containing servants, servants' servants, guards, cooks, tent pitchers, spare parts, mechanics and the flocks of sheep and chickens which will be consumed en route. The procession, which looks like a well-furnished motorized division, proceeds quite slowly owing to many pauses for tea, coffee, readjustments and prayers. Night stops are not made at hotels, since there are no hotels in the desert between Riad and Mecca, but at mud houses situated at convenient spots along the way, which also serve as gas stations.

To understand the activities which have chiefly engaged King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud's attention in Arabia since he completed his conquest of the sub-continent shortly after World War I, it is necessary to have some idea of what Arabia consists. In desert Arabia, for example, the climate makes shelter a nonessential but water a rarity doubly precious because it is indispensable to the only practicable industry, that of raising sheep or camels. From these conditions it follows that much of the population is on the move all the time, trying to find a place where it has rained. Outside of towns and oases, where valuable date palms grow, all the land in Arabia belongs to everyone and did so long before anyone had ever heard of Lenin.

Arabians are disinclined to overvalue manual toil but, observing that rain comes from the sky, they long since figured out where God lives. Arabians also assigned to God a far larger place in the scheme of things than that customarily allowed Him by peoples whose pietistic landscapes are cluttered up with complications such as woods and forests. Moslems feel that Allah will provide for them and he generally does so.

The antiquity of Arabia is not a matter of a few quaint customs, style of native architecture or a picturesque way of dressing. Arabia itself is a remote era preserved complete and perfect, like a fly in amber, except that it remains alive. To the student of current history, Arabian current history therefore has the same fascination which a roomful of live Ptolemies would have for an archeologist or a forest full of breathing pterodactyls for a biologist. This is

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Most modern palace of Ibn Saud's dozen is located at El Kharj, 54 miles from Riad. Here Arabian engineers pump water from the ancient well to irrigate 2,500 acres of barley, wheat and alfalfa.

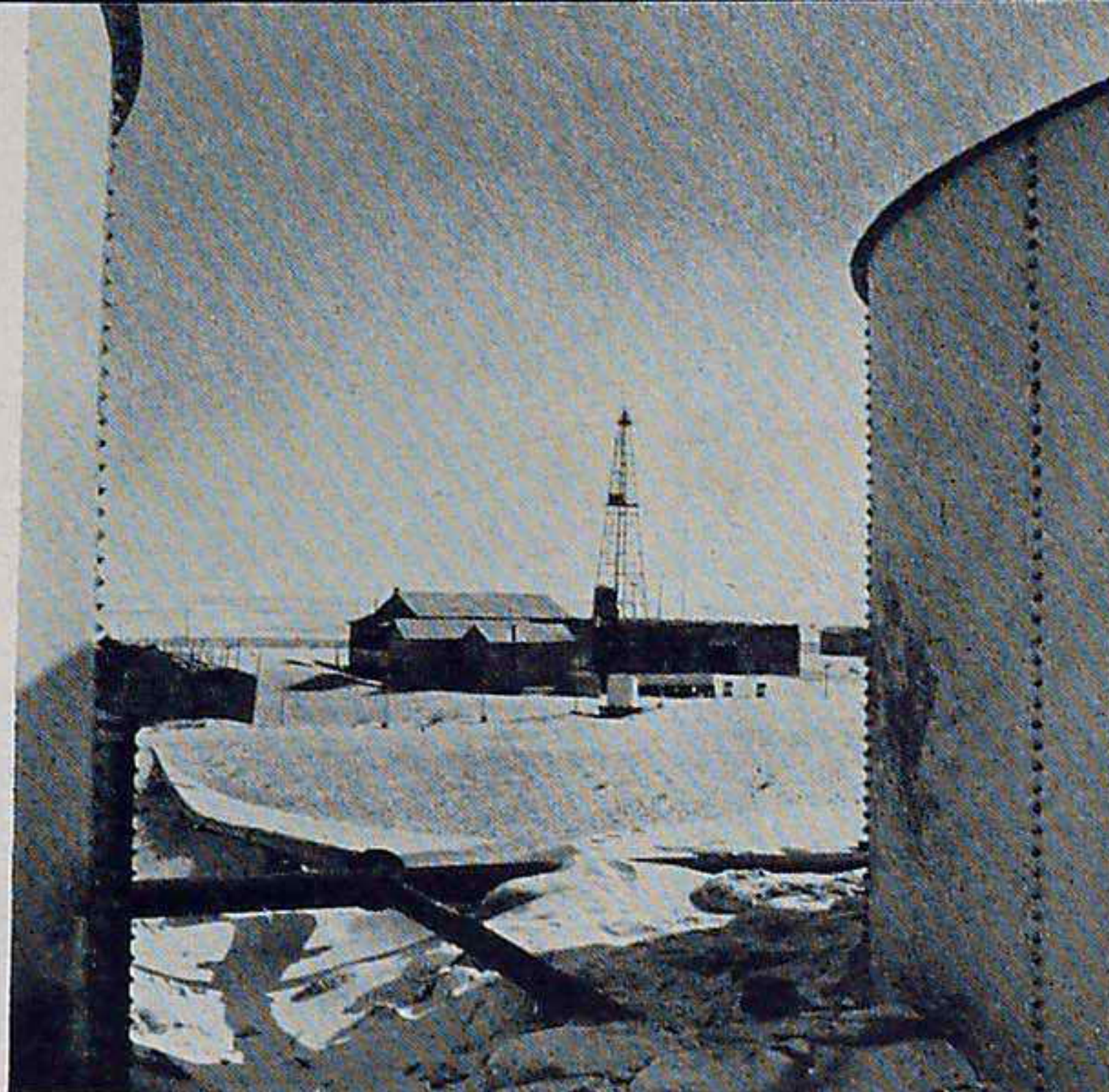


Water is far more important to Arabians than money or sex, yet an Arab rarely dies of thirst even when there is a drought. Here is one of wonderful natural wells at El Kharj. Below: irrigation ditch.

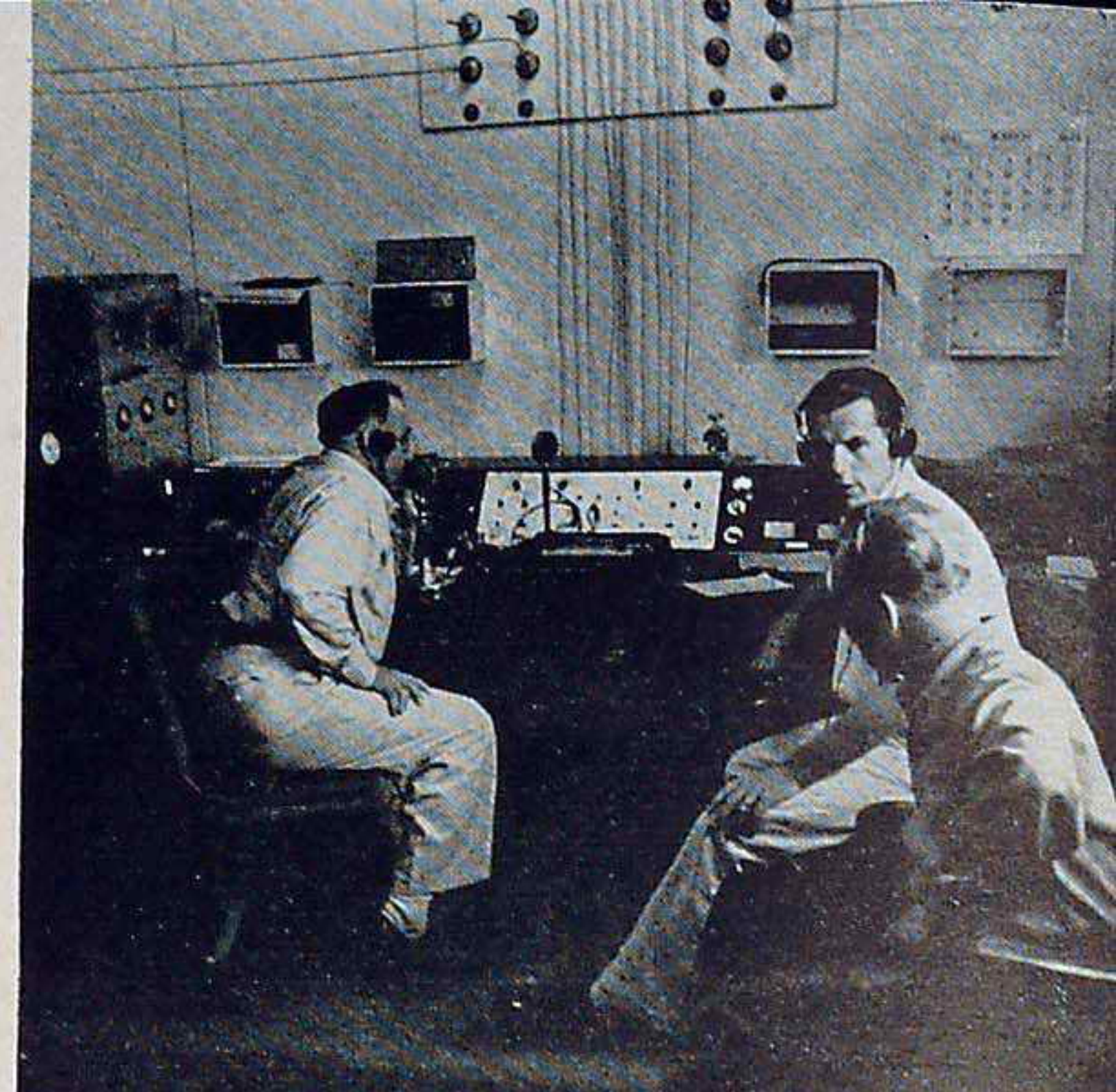




In air-conditioned house at Dhahran, Floyd Oligher, (center), manager for California Arabian, talks business.



Oil well, inland from the Persian Gulf, belongs to California Arabian Standard Oil which has leased since 1939 a third of Saudi Arabia.



Radio station at Dhahran keeps Americans in touch with outside world. Oil royalties now balance Ibn Saud's budget.

IBN SAUD (continued)

one reason why the majority of the few Europeans who have visited Arabia have written books about it and why the good writers have been inspired to such good books. It is also one reason why, in adjusting the time level of his country with that of the Western World, Ibn Saud found himself confronted by unique complexities. Trimings like cars, telephones and radios did no more to make Arabia modern than a colonial door knocker does to make a cottage old.

Arab hospitality, like tribal ownership of real estate, is an ancient and environmental virtue. Its compensating vice was the desert raid. Both were in effect rude schemes for sharing what the country had of wealth and both were governed by convention. According to the law of hospitality, an Arab must share everything he has with any friendly stranger who asks him to—a practical measure, since he may soon be in the same fix himself. According to custom, an Arab who needed something badly was entitled to take it away from someone else who, owing to God's mercy, had a lot, thus bringing a competitive element into a way of life which would otherwise ignore this fundamental human need. Raids on a scale ranging from petty larceny to guerrilla warfare had always been an integral part of the sheep-raising industry in Arabia until Ibn Saud appeared upon the scene. The King saw that, despite its general acceptance, the raid was an obsolete device which interfered with the national unity he wanted to develop. Consequently he eradicated it completely, an achievement which, if it had been the only one he accomplished, would have made his reign unique in Arabian history.

Off with his toe

As a further incentive to good behavior Ibn Saud revived the old Koranic penalties for theft and murder, i.e., amputation and beheading. Also, he organized an extensive police force. Knowledge of tracks in the sand is an essential part of desertcraft. Arabian police use footprints much as the G-man uses fingerprints. A good detective, it is claimed, can tell not only which way and how fast a camel is going but whether a man or woman is riding it, and in many cases, where it comes from and to whom it belongs. He also carries in his head the footprints of most of the known criminals in the country. Within a few years Ibn Saud, aided by his footprint experts, transformed Arabia from a country where property rights were scorned into one where they were revered. Responsibility for law enforcement rests nowadays on local governors appointed by the King. How thoroughly they understand His

Majesty's wishes in the matter was shown when a wayfarer reported to one of the King's governors that he had found a bag of rice in the desert. The governor ordered the wayfarer's toe removed on the ground that if he knew the bag contained rice he had examined it too closely.

Ibn Saud's extravagant insistence upon honesty is nowadays only less celebrated than his munificence, with which it sometimes comes in conflict. The King, who knows the name of every visitor to Riad, sees that none of them leaves town without an appropriate present. The sword which he gave Kirk was one of several which he keeps on hand for celebrated foreigners or important sheiks. He also has cases of watches, closets full of cloaks and chests of sovereigns for the same purpose. For poorer visitors, the King runs a kind of gigantic centralized soup kitchen, containing an oven large enough for a camel. Here any Bedouin can get a meal by asking for it.

Arabian executions and amputations are done in public where they will make the maximum impression. In beheadings, the culprit gets a gentle prick on the back of the neck which makes him stretch his muscles with anticipation. This enables the executioner, a large black man from the Sudan which supplies most of the country's unpaid servant class, to slice the head off neatly. Stonings for adultery, which occur infrequently, are also usually fatal. In the case of judicial amputations, the offending paw is allowed to fall on the ground and the burglar's stump is then dipped in boiling oil which cauterizes the wound. An Arabian who has lost his hand is not disgraced as completely as a U. S. jailbird. He is considered to have paid society in full and is treated accordingly except that he cannot, of course, eat with his friends. Arabs eat with one hand only, reserving the other for purposes of hygiene.

One of the chief functions of Ibn Saud's kingdom is to entertain as many as 250,000 Moslem pilgrims to Mecca each year. In the old days, when they were regarded as fair game for robbers, these visitors could not even make the last 50-mile lap from Jedda to Mecca without an armed escort. Since the money the pilgrims bring the country is one of its chief sources of revenue, this amounted to killing the goose that laid the eggs. Reports of the phenomenal safety which travelers currently enjoy, carried home by the pilgrims, have restored the rite to its original prestige and, in pre-war days, increased the nation's revenue accordingly. Currently, of course, the war has cut down travel to Arabia, along with all other travel. The problem of how to run the nation with this source of income seriously diminished is one of the King's most pressing problems.

Of the King's total revenue, the pilgrimage, the British Government and the California Arabian Standard Oil Company each supplies about

a third. Since the pilgrimage has been seriously diminished during the war, the deficit, if any, is made up by the other two. In handling his funds, the King gets along without a budget or even a Federal Reserve system, a method which apparently has advantages since he probably spends less in a year than Washington spends in a few hours. Having no banks, Arabia naturally has no banknotes or other paper currency. The medium of exchange is the gold sovereign.

In monetary matters the King is assisted by his able finance minister, Abdulla El Suleiman. Since the national food of Arabia is rice and the national drink coffee, both of which have to be imported, the chief problem at present is to increase the nation's agricultural resources. Last winter a U. S. Department of State mission, headed by K. S. Twitchell, a native of St. Albans, Vt. who is one of the ablest U. S. experts on Arabia, made a 10,000-mile tour of the country to explore possibilities. Meanwhile, Abdulla El Suleiman is carrying out large-scale investigations on a reclamation project not far from Riad, where natural wells make it possible to irrigate 2,500 acres or so of highly fertile soil which produces wheat and garden vegetables.

Improved communications inside his realm have enabled Ibn Saud to spread his reforms and make them effective. By radio and wireless telephone systems, he informs himself, through his sheiks, about goings on inside his country to a degree inconceivable to citizens of nations where the government is less personalized. In Arabia, for instance, while Bedouins with their flocks may roam at will, other travelers, in order to go from one section of the country to another, require the King's express consent. Their progress is then reported to him from place to place.

He likes news broadcasts

Attached to the court now are three interpreters whose function is to tune in on foreign news broadcasts from New York, London, Berlin and Rome and translate them to the King. At regular intervals during the day, these interpreters enter the courtroom and at a sign from His Majesty kneel down in front of him and rattle off their transcripts. Himself a military expert of wide firsthand experience, the King probably knows more about the progress of the war than most officials in Washington. He rather expects it to end next year in an Allied victory.

Running a country the size of Arabia as though it were a fruit stand makes considerable demands on the King's time. His day usually begins at about an hour before dawn when he wakes up and reads the Koran for an hour. At daybreak the muezzin issues the call to prayers from the palace minaret. After prayers the day begins in earnest.



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IBN SAUD (continued)

wives are troubled by problems of diet but unlike U. S. wives, spend most of their time discussing how to put on weight.

Many of the King's wives have been selected chiefly for political reasons, like one of the present quartet who is the daughter of an important North Arabian tribal sheik. Another is a vivacious young Rashid lady whose lively ways have made her a social favorite of the palace. The other two members of His Majesty's quota are his own cousins, of whom the senior is the mother of no fewer than 13 of his children.

In view of the King's opportunities and enthusiasm, the chances are that current estimates which place the number of living princes born in wedlock at 31 are wildly conservative. The magnitude of Arab royal families has often in the past encouraged disputes about the succession. In Ibn Saud's case, the chance of such rivalry has been minimized by a clear understanding that his oldest living son, Saud, is the crown prince. Saud, who looks like his father and shows the same receptivity to Western innovations, is Governor of Riad and one of his father's most trusted younger executives. Feisal, the King's second son, acts as Minister for Foreign Affairs and spends some of his time in Jedda, the Red Sea port which is the only town in Arabia where Europeans are permitted to reside, in order to be near its foreign consulates and legations.

Except for Saud and Feisal who have both been to London, and a third son, Mansour, who has visited Cairo, none of the princes have traveled outside Arabia. The King's younger sons, like his grandsons, of whom no census has even been attempted, go to a special princes' school in Riad where they learn to read the Koran and do simple arithmetic. Outside school they spend most of their time playing Arabian knucklebones or soccer, which resemble Western forms of the same sports, racing their horses or hunting on the desert in their automobiles. Most of the princes have learned to drive and own two or three cars as well as powerful firearms by the time they are 12. While their father indulges their love of manly sports, he does not spoil his progeny in other ways. A few weeks ago two of the princes arrived at the palace during prayers when all the gates were shut and talked the guard into letting them in, which is against the rules. When the King found out about this abuse of their prerogatives, he sent for the boys and personally gave them a caning in the courtroom.

Shooting gazelles from a Ford

Like his sons, the King himself is an enthusiastic Nimrod, though the tire shortage has forced him to cut down on this sport. When shooting gazelle or bustard, Arabia's best game, the King usually uses a Ford convertible with the top down. He sits in front with the driver, holding one gun. In the back seat two assistants load other guns and a third assistant holds the falcon. Falcons are used by Arabians in place of bird dogs or beaters, which would be useless in such extremely wide-open spaces, to locate the game. In a weekend gazelle shoot, His Majesty often bags 100 or more which are then baked in the camel oven and served to the poor on 6-ft. circular mats in the Riad soup kitchen. In addition to hunting, the King likes farming and maintains a camel-breeding ranch just as many millionaires in the U. S. breed black Angus cattle or race horses. The King raises the latter also, specializing in pure-blooded Arab horses of which there are only about 1,500 good specimens left in the world. Fond of outdoor life, the King gets away from Riad every spring as soon as the weather really warms up and usually spends the summer living in a desert tent-city populated by his soldiers, servants, wives, sons and courtiers. In the palace the King sleeps on an ordinary iron bed. In the desert he prefers to roll up in a blanket or merely his cloak and lie on the floor—consisting of a carpet spread on the warm, dry sand—just as he did for years on end in the days of his early desert wars.

The chief problems of the Arab world after the war will be two: 1) a federation, or at least a customs union of all the Arab countries and 2) the Jews in Palestine.

Many Arabs deplore the current snarl of customs barriers which often seem to have been the chief alteration since unified Turkish rule was replaced by French, British and Palestinian mandates and alliances. They feel that the question is not one of imposing artificial unification on disparate entities but rather one of removing artificial barriers to a natural union. Britain's attitude toward an Arab federation, as articulated recently by Anthony Eden, is that the Government views with favor efforts toward federation made by the Arabs themselves. Ibn Saud, taking the practical view as usual, is ready to act in the matter as soon as there is a chance of working out a



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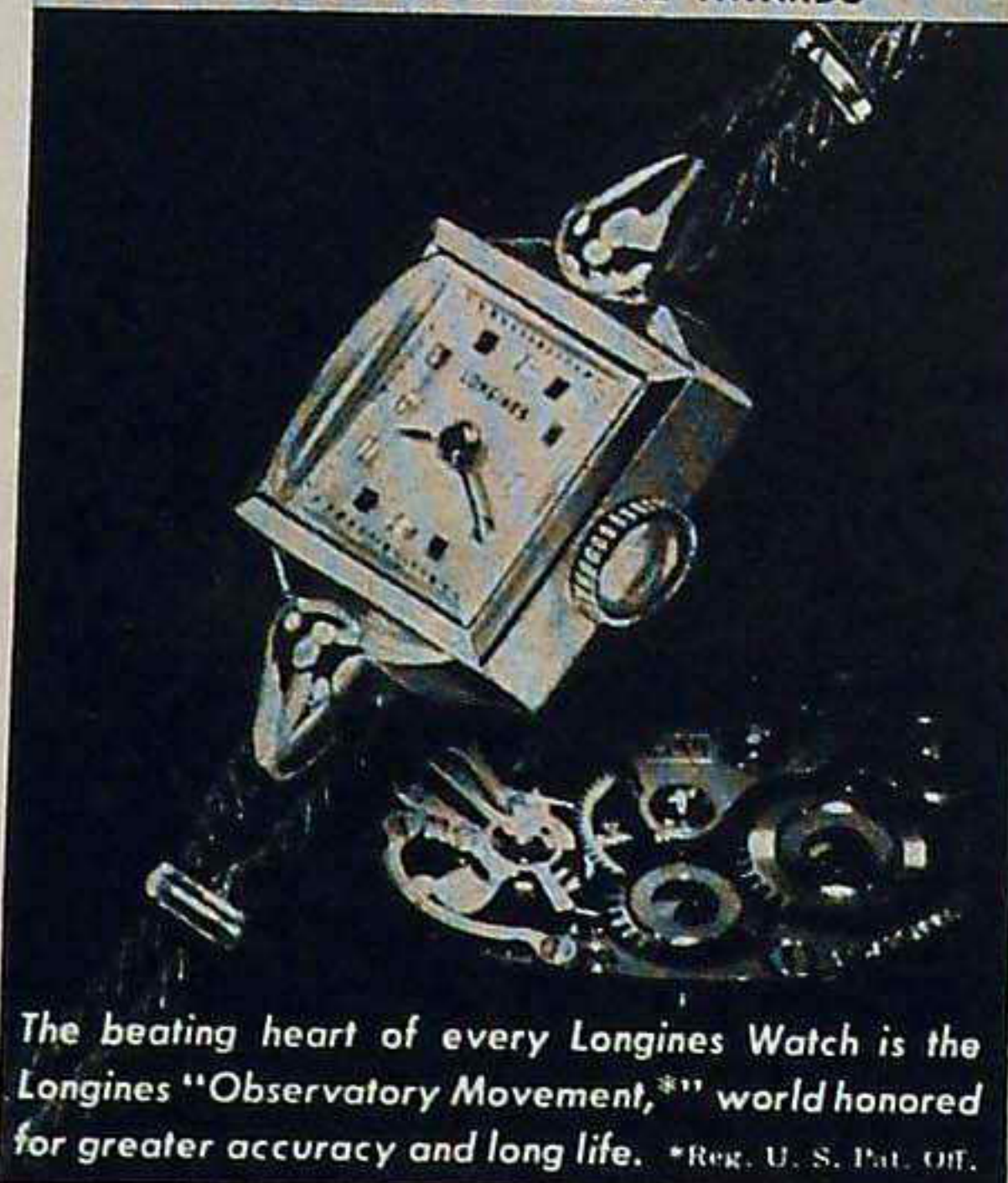
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IBN SAUD (continued)

sound, businesslike solution, but he sees no such opportunity as yet.

As to the Palestine question, His Majesty is more outspoken (see text of interview on pp. 76-77). Like most Arabs, he feels that the British Government's famous promise during the last war to make a Jewish Home in Palestine was about as realistic as would have been a promise by an Arab Government to found a Jewish Home in Devonshire. Since Jerusalem has always been a Moslem Holy Land as well as a Christian and a Jewish one, and since its population was for centuries preponderantly Arab after the Romans ejected the Jews in the 2nd Century A. D., Arabs wonder why Palestine was not the least suitable rather than the most suitable spot on the globe for such a venture. While reluctantly prepared to accept the existing state of affairs in Palestine and to admit that the influx of Jews since the last war may in some ways have done good, Arabs are profoundly unsympathetic to the idea of entertaining more Jews and even more so to the idea of extending the Palestinian border eastward after the war.

He regards Americans as his partners

Always a staunch supporter of the British, Ibn Saud is at least equally partial to Americans. In private conversation he recently summed up his feelings in pithy Arabic by pointing out that, while the British are his friends, the Americans are his partners. His reference to partnership is based on his business dealings with the only two foreign companies currently operating in Arabia. One of these is the Saudi Arabian Mining Syndicate, Ltd., whose gold-production methods are among the most extraordinary in this generally eccentric industry. The S. A. M. S. concession, situated 200 miles northeast of Mecca, is reworking waste material discarded by crews who worked the diggings before the time of Christ. Ibn Saud holds stock in the enterprise, as does his friend Mr. Twitchell.

Far surpassing any other major business concern in Arabia is, of course, the California Arabian Standard Oil Company whose activities would be quite impressive even in a community like California, let alone in Arabia where liquid wealth is customarily represented by a few cups of camel's milk. The company's efforts to work its find on a large scale, somewhat delayed by the war, are now being forwarded again and constitute a notable fraction of the United Nations war effort. Meanwhile, its presence in Arabia is welcome for many reasons in addition to financial ones. Its machine shops at Dhahran on the east coast make handy repair bases for the King's automobiles. Its engineers also help out with the reclamation project at El Kharj and in many other ways. Shallow water wells have been Arabia's chief problem since the dawn of history. These are of course child's play for the oil drillers for whom sinking them through the sand has now become a routine chore, charged off to good relations with the landlord.

In its dealings with His Majesty, California Arabian has, like S. A. M. S., done the U. S. Government a valuable good turn. Indeed, the cordiality that exists between the King and the United Nations is, to some degree, merely a projection of the friendliness between the King and their representatives. The degree of their cordiality was well illustrated some months ago when Ibn Saud paid a visit to the oil company at Dhahran. This establishment is designed to minimize nostalgia among its inhabitants. Fenced off from the desert by woven wire, it bristles with shower baths, clinics, modern dairy farms, swimming pools, air-conditioned bungalows and so many other luxuries and conveniences that even an ordinary American feels somewhat at a loss there. Surrounded by all this Western paraphernalia, the King comported himself quite as competently as the celebrated Connecticut Yankee who made an equivalent journey through time in the opposite direction. After being shown through the frosted cottages at Dhahran, the King invited the resident manager to inspect his camp in the desert, an honor rarely accorded fellow Moslems, let alone Christians. Later in the evening the King gave the oil men a banquet preceded by an Arab sword dance.

The engaging quality which Mark Twain's celebrated hero brought into a remote age of faith was that of ingenuity. The even more engaging quality which Ibn Saud has to offer is that of a kingly belief in eventual rightness. For like the shepherd who, when he met Ibn Saud in the desert, recognized him by his generosity, the King can identify Allah by his goodness. It did not surprise him greatly when Allah, who sent Arabia its ancient rains, provided also its new oil. Nor will it surprise him greatly if God presently provides also not merely victory, but even the bright and honest world that should go with it.

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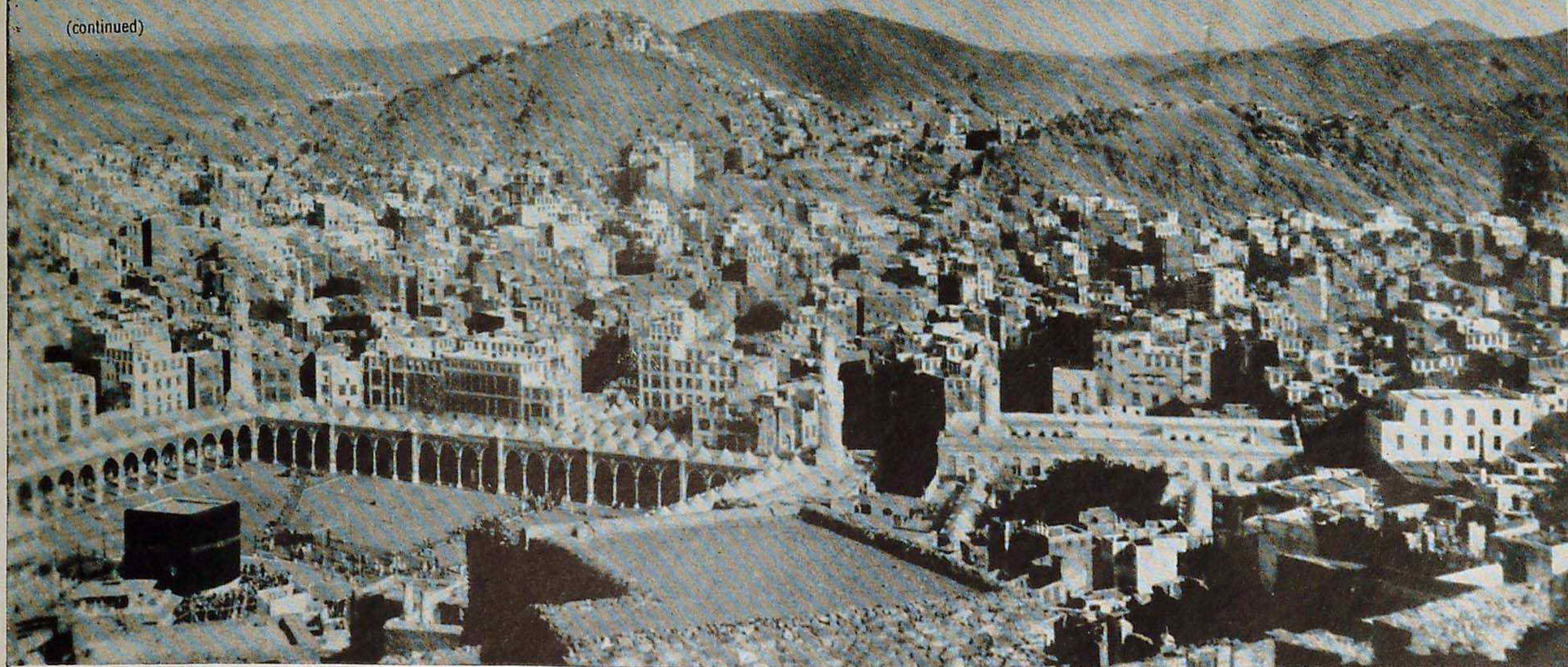
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CONTINUED ON PAGE 87



A holy city long before Islam, Mecca is set among barren hills 45 miles from the Red Sea coast. Its heart is the Kaaba

(which merely means cubic building), black-covered shrine at left above. Parts of colonnade around the courtyard go

back more than a thousand years. Meccans themselves are multilingual Indians, Persians, Turks, Javanese, Africans.

AN IMPORTANT FOOTNOTE TO THE BUSCH-LANDRY VISIT TO ARABIA:

MECCA

ISLAM PROHIBITS NON-MOSLEM VISITORS TO ITS HOLIEST CITY

Near the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia is Mecca, holiest city in all Islam. Five times every day 300,000,000 Mohammedans turn toward Mecca in prayer and once a year up to 250,000 make a pilgrimage there. If a non-Moslem is found in Mecca or in a 100-square-mile area around it, the people may tear him to pieces. That area is *haram* (meaning "prohibited"), is marked by plain monuments.

Naturally Messrs. Busch and Landry, as the guests of Ibn Saud, did not do him the discourtesy of trying to go to Mecca, much less of attempting to photograph it. A few brash non-Moslems have got into Mecca in disguise and many Moslems have photographed the sacred place. These photographs are on sale in Cairo and Bombay. Some of them are reproduced here. Because Mecca looms so large in the daily life of all Saudi Arabia, the editors of LIFE attach these pictures as an important footnote to the

Busch-Landry expedition, to round out this report on the Arab world.

Like the Jews, Arabs claim Abraham as their father. According to ancient Arab legend the Angel Gabriel threw down to him the Black Stone now set in the building below. The Jews stem from the "legitimate" younger son of Abraham, Isaac. The Arabs stem from Ishmael, Abraham's older son by the servant Hagar who was repudiated by Abraham. Both are Semites and the religious quarrel is really a family quarrel. Mecca is where Hagar and Ishmael, dying of thirst on their wanderings, found water at the Zamzam well. In the 7th Century A.D. Mohammed, of the ruling tribe of Mecca, revived the old legend of Abraham, who supposedly lived about 1500 B.C., launched the greatest Arab empire of all time, founded a new religion, produced the Koran and died at Medina, the second Holy City, in 632 A.D.

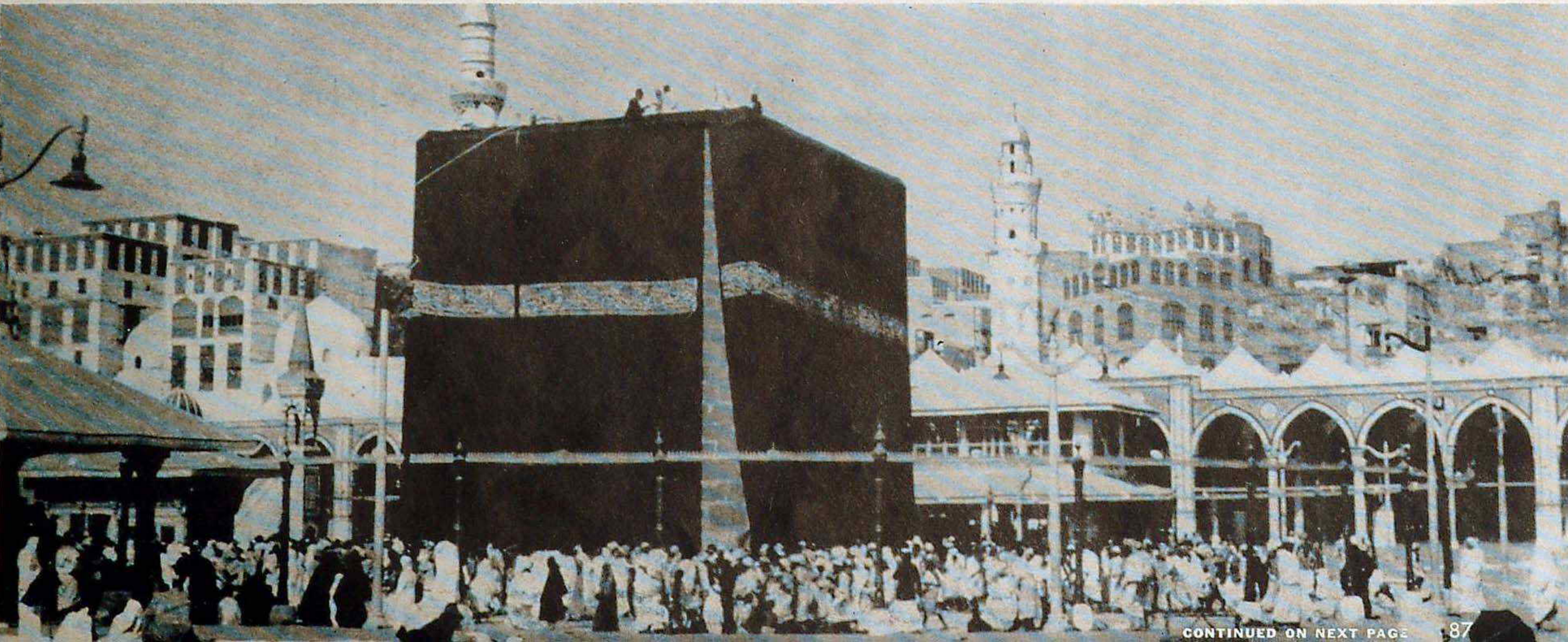
variously described as black meteorite or red granite, which the pilgrims kiss in rapture. Twice a year the hidden door,



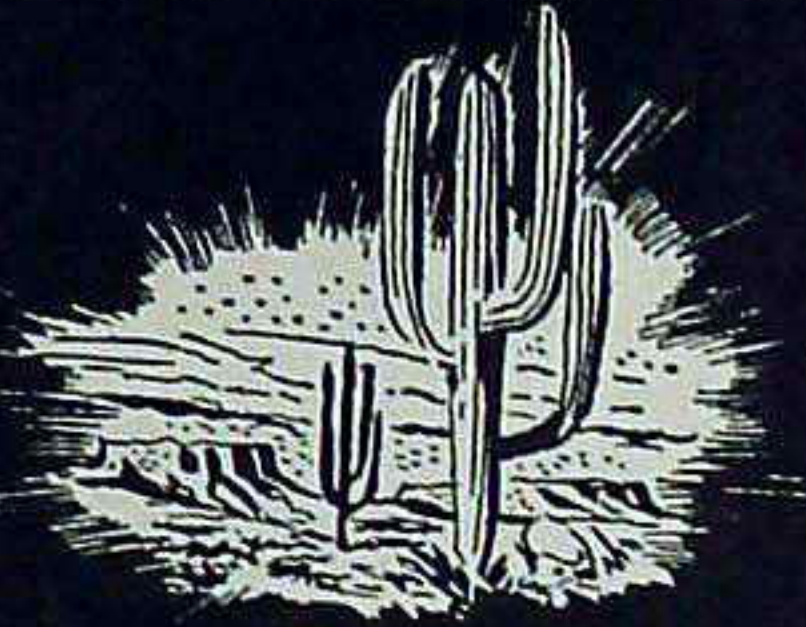
Pilgrims, who have come to kiss the sacred Black Stone in Mecca, sit on carpets in great courtyard around the Kaaba.

whose sill is seven feet above ground, is ceremoniously unlocked and the King enters to wash out this Holy of Holies.

The Kaaba is a very ancient stone building always covered with carpet. Set in one outside corner is the Black Stone,



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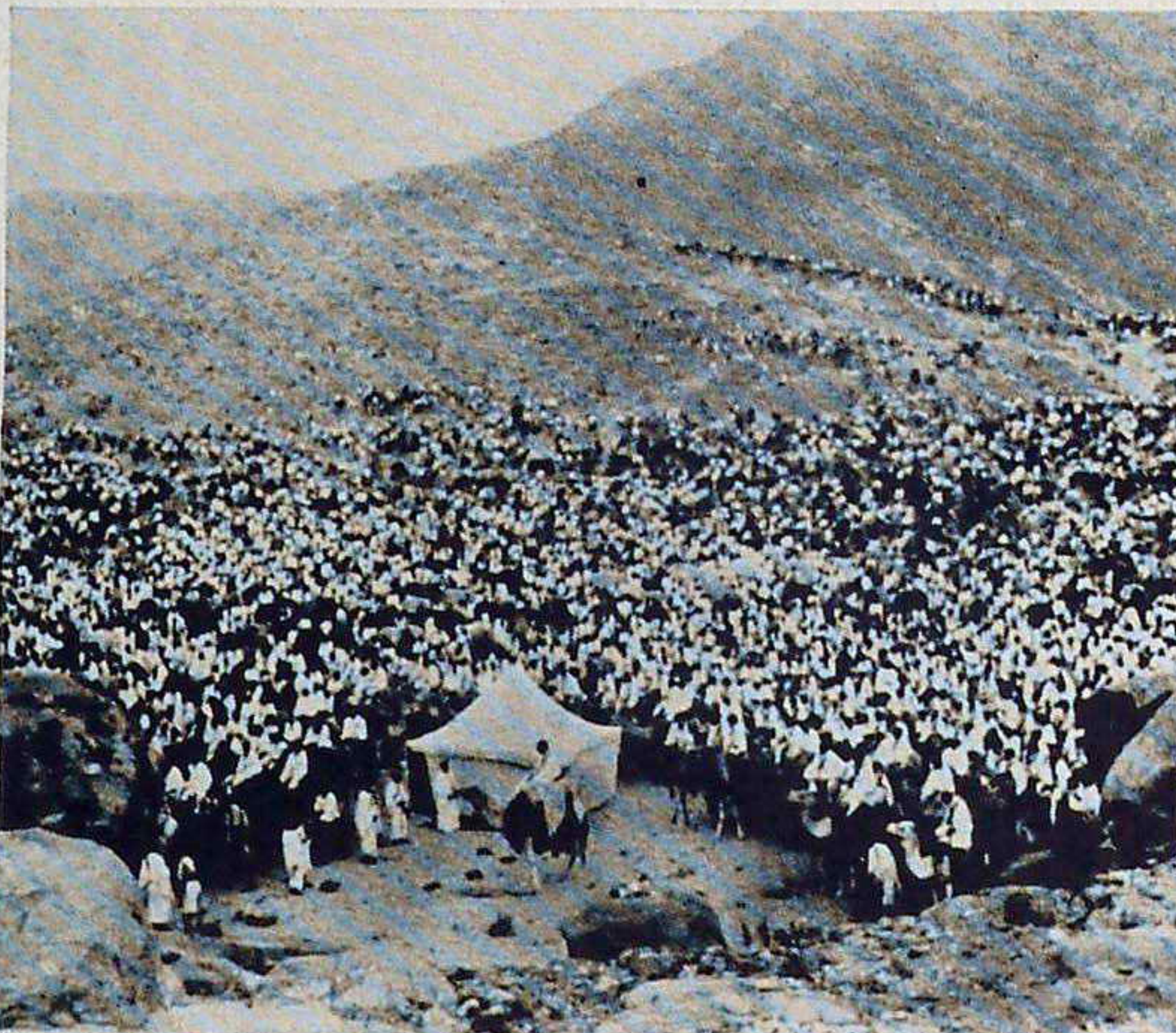
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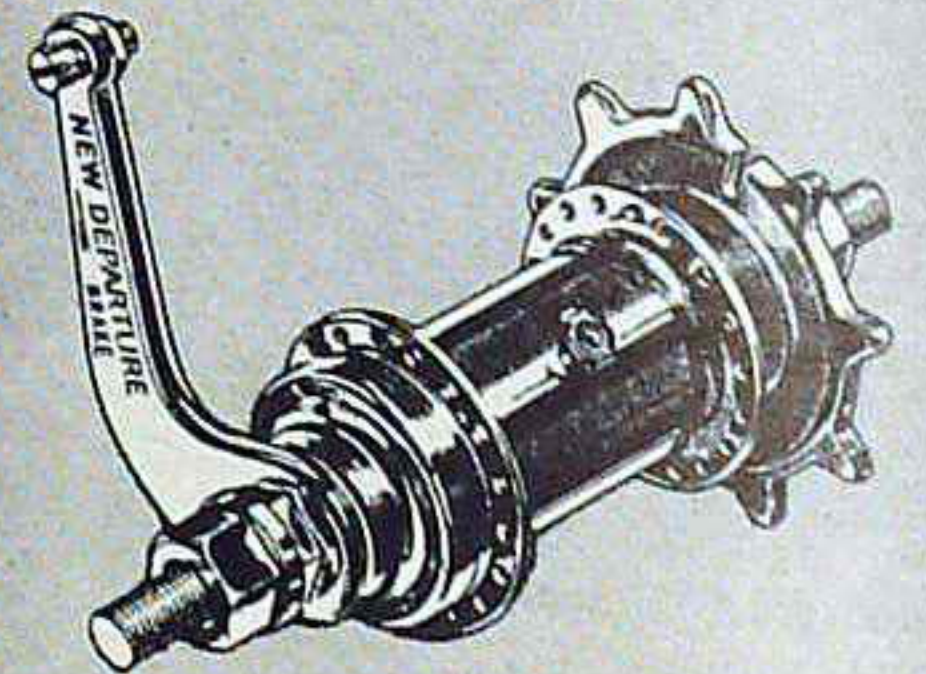
Mecca pilgrims must stand all one afternoon in the last month of the Arab year on the Hill of Mercy (background), at Arafat outside Mecca after a night of devotion. After sundown the tent-city breaks camp and goes to next station in the pilgrimage.



When Prince Feisal, Ibn Saud's second son, visited Arafat, Wahhabi horsemen gathered around his tent. Ceremony after Arafat is to throw seven stones at a cairn, representing the devil. These rites are of great antiquity, associated with Meccan fairs.



The head of a thief who robbed a foreign pilgrim is displayed as a deterrent to crime, at the "middle place of the devil", Shaitan Ausat. Ibn Saud has accomplished miracle of making the pilgrimage safe from plundering Arabs. This brings more pilgrims.



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