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PLAN FOR BEIRUT

Work on rebuilding war-torn Beirut will start in spring and take six years to complete.

The Minister of Public Works said the plan was broadly based on one drawn up in 1977 by Paris-based architects. But the Minister said the original ideas had now been modified by local architects, and provided for repairs in infrastructure, such as electricity and water, and for renovation as well as for new construction.

One of the problems has been how to rebuild one of the oldest and most characteristic features of the city, the old suqs, under the plan. Most of them will be rebuilt or restored.

POWER AND WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS

The Minister of Housing, Power and Water Resources recently mentioned three major projects he is keen on having initiated as soon as possible:

- The Litani Project: Plans for the scheme are almost complete, and the estimated cost of the first phase is put at LL 1.86 billion.
- Awali River Project: This provides for supplying Beirut with water from the river, and a ten-year old plan on the subject is being now re-evaluated taking into consideration technical changes necessitated by present day economic conditions. The project has been approved by the World Bank which is willing to finance it, and it would be completed within four years. The estimated cost is LL 600 million, and the scheme would allow for a guaranteed supply of 250,000 cubic meters of water daily for Beirut city.
- Damour Wells Project: Provides for the supply of water to Beirut at a rate of 35,000 to 50,000 cubic feet daily. Negotiations are under way for financing the cost estimated at LL 132 million, and tenders will be called as soon as the moneys are available. It would take one year to complete.
- Other projects under consideration include the rehabilitation of the road network and repairs to the present sewage system in the Beirut downtown sector.

STATISTICS REGARDING FOREIGN WORKERS

Statistics published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, regarding the number of foreign workers in Lebanon, were recently published in the press.

Main highlights of the statistical report are the following:

- Total number of valid work permits amounts to 26,044, out of which 13,609 were issued recently and 12,435 were renewed.
- Arab nationals and particularly Egyptians (5,816) and Syrians (5,259) hold the greatest share amounting to 15,010 or 57.6% of the grand total.
- Other countries nationals - by order of importance - are: Indians (2,856), nationals of Sri Lanka (2,094), Turks (1,895), Ethiopians (480), French (420), Pakistanis (276), US citizens (196).