

EGYPT

WATER SUPPLY, WASTE DISCUSSED

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[Commentary by Salah Muntasir]

[Text] It seems that there is nothing strange about the fact that water consumption in Cairo rises during the hours of 3 and 4 in the morning, for all the letters which I have received commenting on this alarming fact that has been discovered by the Cairo water agency confirm that this time, between 3 and 4 in the morning, is the only time during which thousands, or say hundreds of thousands, of people who live in Cairo can get water. Those who wrote some of the letters mentioned to me that family members take turns among themselves to get up at that time to fill buckets, containers and bottles with water in preparation for the day's dry spell! Some of them mentioned that water does not get up to the third and fourth floors--as in the Shaykulani area in Shubra--except at dawn.

On the subject of water consumption and those who do not get it, Rif'at Muharib of the Suez Canal agency suggests making available to the public the installation of faucets having a "jazarah". This is an expression that he has often repeated, and I have understood it to be a technical term for a washerless type of faucet.

He also proposed connecting a line for "impure water" within cities, to be used for watering gardens and crops, [cleaning] in front of shops and streets, putting out fires, and in building and construction jobs, thus saving the pure water that is used for these purposes that he mentioned.

However, Sa'd 'Ali Wahbah, a bachelor of science at Adco, proposes that more than half a million 12-year-old students in the sixth elementary be trained to install faucet washers, siphon stoppers, and Butagas cylinder washers. He suggests that that be done in school by science teachers and teachers in technical and agricultural education in ten consecutive and specialized periods.

The man making this suggestion--which I do not find preposterous, and in fact I might encourage--says that this would require a "locally made, hand operated key" with three openings: one for Butagas cylinders, one for 1/2 inch faucets, and a third for 3/4 inch faucets. This key can be manufactured in military factories at a cost of about half a pound.

Besides that, he proposed spending 30 piasters per student to buy the washers and string for training. This would bring the cost per student to 80 piasters. In other words, the total cost of training half a million students would be 400,000 pounds.

But with that we would save the equivalent of millions of pounds in water lost every year.

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