

Mini boom for building in Dubai

MORE THAN 1,000 buildings were completed or under construction in Dubai in the first three quarters of 1983. Another 1,500 are in the planning stages.

"This," said Mr Abdel Razak, senior official of the Dubai municipality's building department, "was a small boom period for the emirate".

Mr Razak, in a newspaper interview in Dubai, said that most of the vacant plots in the city and suburbs were expected to be utilised within the next four or five years. He said that the boom was the result of the Dubai government's policy of providing incentives to nationals in the shape of free plots of land with a time limit for construction.

Additional factors were the drop in the price of construction materials, and the increase in demand in the emirate in the wake of expansion of Dubai's economic base.

He said that although there was a big demand for mainly middle class flats, particularly of government apartments, the rate of development was such that rents were unlikely to rise.

He said that the construction peak in the emirate had been in 1977. After a lull it had picked up again in 1980. In 1982 alone 1,063 buildings were constructed, and in the first nine months of this year 1,112 more were completed or under construction. A further 1,500 building plans approved.

The municipality has set limits on the building in the busy commercial Deira and Dubai areas and high rise buildings are beginning to appear around the city outskirts.

Water and sewerage projects in Jordan

THE WATER Supply Corporation (WSC) of Jordan is to announce tenders for the implementation of a water and sewerage project in the Zarqa region as part of a programme supported by the US Agency for International Development to develop the skills of local companies.

The project involves the construction of a wastewater treatment plant, the laying of sewers at Sukhneh, main sewer lines from Ruseifa to Sukhneh in addition to the purchase of 240 kilometres of piping to drain

away rain water in Zarqa and Ruseifa. In all 10 towns will be supplied with water and sewerage systems. Jouzy and Partners is expected to be awarded the contract for Mafraq, Ramlah, Ajloun, Anjara, Ain Jinna and Kufrunja. Consulting Engineer Centre is to design schemes for Madaba and Tafila and Arabtech Consulting Office for Karak and Ma'an. The firm's American partners are Engineering Science, Black and Veatch and CH2M Hill respectively.

Work on the project will start in April next year and will be completed by 1988 according to the WSC. The project is financed by USAID, World Bank, West German and Saudi Arabian financial institutions in addition to the Jordanian government treasury.

USAID loan for Jordan water

AN AGREEMENT was signed recently with the US International Development Fund (USAID) granting Jordan an additional longterm loan \$10 million to finance water projects and administrative services. USAID previously granted Jordan a longterm loan of \$13 million dollars for the same projects.

Aqaba-Amman transmission line contracts landed

THE JORDAN Electricity Authority (JEA) has awarded contracts for the transmission line project from the Aqaba thermal power station to Amman. The UK firm Balfour Beatty will supply and install the 400 — kilovolt, double circuit line while Austria's VMR Berndorf will supply conductors and earthwire. A third contract for the supply of insulators and fittings has not yet been awarded.

Drilling starts on Qatar's North Field

QATAR General Petroleum Corporation (QGPC) with technical assistance from minority joint venture partners BP and Compagnie Francaise des Petroles (CFP) was starting up preparations for development drilling in late January on the giant offshore North gasfield. Since a decision was taken to go ahead with developing the field,

UAE payment delays criticised

DELAYS in payments by government departments in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, and by the federal government of the United Arab Emirates have been criticised by Abu Dhabi's National Consultative Council. As a result of the delays, some contractors have been jailed for non-payment of loans from banks, a senior member of the NCC told a Council meeting recently.

Mohammed bin Brook, chairman of the Council's committee on economic and financial affairs, told Council members that the government's financial system "should be competent enough to eliminate the reasons that have caused the delay in payments for contractors", according to a local daily paper.

"Because of this delay, some contractors have already found themselves locked up behind bars being unable to pay back the loans they had taken from banks to complete the projects."

Bin Brook, one of Abu Dhabi's top local businessmen, also criticised the delay in government salary payments.

"There are also delays in the payment of the salaries of government employees. The government should know that the employees are not millionaires. They are ordinary people who need their salaries at the proper time. How could we expect someone to be productive if the government is not in a position to pay him his salary at the end of the month?"

During 1983, government salaries, which used to be paid

regularly at the end of each calendar month, have been subject to delays of as much as two weeks, as a result of the general tightening up of government expenditure. Also subject to criticism has been the fact that the government salary scales have not been increased for several years, despite inflation, although there has been a series of increases in allowances, mainly for UAE nationals.

The NCC meeting also agreed to refer to a special committee a complaint from another member, Mohammed bin Mubarak, that a number of draft laws have been recently introduced by legislative bodies without first being referred to the Council for its comments, as is required under the Emirate's constitution.

The 60-member National Consultative Council, an appointed and advisory body, is made up of members of the main tribal and family groupings within Abu Dhabi. In contrast to the Federal National Council, a similar body with members from each of the UAE's seven member emirates, the NCC has generally been a fairly quiescent body. As a result of the economic slowdown of the past couple of years, however, many prominent Abu Dhabi businessmen have suffered financial problems.

The Council's chairman is Sheikh Sultan bin Shourou al Dhahiri, of the powerful Al Ain — based Dhawahir tribe, who is also representative at the Jebel Dhanna oil terminal of Abu Dhabi Ruler (and UAE President), Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan.

one of the world's biggest and all non-associated gas, QGPC has been test drilling to delineate the field. If all goes according to schedule gas production will begin some time in 1988.

Plans are to liquify most of the gas but it was recently announced, following the November 1983 GCC summit, that there were projects for a pipeline network to carry Qatar's gas to industrial plants in all the GCC member countries.

Amman's King Abdullah complex

THE AMMAN Development Corporation (ADC) expects to invite new tenders in mid-January for the construction of the King Abdullah Complex at Wadi

Saqra. The complex will comprise business, commercial and recreational facilities, but the project will now be smaller than originally planned due to tenders being too high. The ADC planned to spend JD 16 million on the project but in the first round of tenders, the lowest bid was JD 16 million from the French Company Societe Generale d'Enterprises.

New documents are being prepared by the consultants, France's Aart — Setap and the local Modern Consulting Office, and should be completed shortly. The retender will now be in two phases, each worth about JD 6 million, and will be offered together if financing is found for the second phase. The 17 prequalified firms who bid in the first round are being invited to retender.