02/11/85

ELIMINATE HYACINTH

THE presence of hyacinth in the Nile River, its tributaries and lakes, is responsible for the loss of approximately three billion cubic metres of water annually. This amount of water would be sufficient to irrigate 500,000 feddans.

In addition to the loss of water, the presence of the hyacinth contributes to the inefficiency of the irrigation systems. Dr. Ahmed Fakhri, the Director of the Research Institute for Maintaining Canals, indicates that the growth of the hyacinth in the waterways accumulates in dense amounts near water irrigation pumps, thereby hindering th performance of the pumps, curtailing the supply of irrigation water to the land and blocking the irrigation openings.

Additionally, the Chairman of the Authority for the Development of Fish Wealth, Dr. Yehia Hassan, states that due to the evaporation of the water caused by the hyacinth covering large areas of the water's surface, the amount of fish in the Nile is declining.

The First Under Secretary of the Ministry of Irrigation, Mr. Tharwat Fahmi, said that the hyacinth uses approximately two per cent of the Nile's water for growth purposes.

Hyacinth cannot be removed by either cutting or any other manual methods, as these methods promote the growth of the plant. Additionally, during its stages of decomposition, hyacinth causes environmental pollution.

The Minister of Irrigation, Mr. Essam Radi, indicates that the Ministry has prepared a comprehensive programme for combating the growth of hyacinth and other such plants in the waterways. He further indicated that the irrigation canals are now clear from hyacinth and the programme will soon be extended to the drainage canals. Furthermore, an additional campaign to control the growth of the hyacinth will commence in January, at which time the dormancy period of the hyacinth ceases.

The hyacinth are now covering an area of approximately 10,000 feddans of the surfaces of the waterways and the cost of its removal will be approximately LE 100,000.

Due to the dangerous effects of the growth of hyacinth in the waterways of Egypt, the government should determine the methods necessary to destroy the plants, not merely clear the waterways. One method, which has proved successful in other parts of the world, is the spraying of the affected waterways with herbicides which prohibit the initial growth of the plants and do not adversely affect the fish in the waterways. This method should be considered, together with other possible solutions. This problem must be given immediate attention due to the water loss incurred, the effects on the country's irrigation systems, the diminished fish wealth and the rapid growth factor of the hyacinth. These problems have already been encountered in the Tal El-Dahab area, located between the Damietta and Dakahlia governorates. Delay in the formulation and implementation of a plan to completely eliminate such growth, as opposed to merely clearing the waterways, will result in an increase in the foregoing problems.

20/10/85

Plan to clear water courses of weeds

EGYPT loses 3 billion cubic metres of water annually because of the excess of weeds growing in the Nile said the Director of the Canals and Drains Research Institute, Dr. Ahmed Fahkeri, He pointed out that this amount of water is sufficient to cultivate 500,000 feddans.

These weeds are obstacles in the way of water running to land lying at the extrmeities of the canals. They also lead to the loss of great amounts of water through evaporation, he said. The weeds also choke the irrigation gates.

An expert in the Nile Plants Combat Project, Dr. Abbas Abul Ez said that one of the other dangers is that if the plant is cut or uprooted manually, it will grow again the next day and this complicates the problem more and more. Through the passage of years this plant can make a lake dry. There are many lakes currently isolated and surrounded by these weeds, and their water has stagnated, especially in Tal el-Dahab region lying between Damietta and Dakahlia governorates. This plant when decomposed becomes a source of biological pollution, Dr. Abul Ez stated.

The Minister of Irrigation, Mr. Esam Radi said that the ministry has set up operation rooms to follow up the implementation of the combat programme. All canals are cleared of these plants and work is currently under way to do the same with the drains. Another combat programme will also start at the beginning of the new year. GSS

15/10/85

Plan to raise potable water outpu

THE Ministry of Housing has started the urgent implemention of a plan to increase potable water in governorates by 500,000 cubic metres daily, at a cost of about LE 150 million. According to an official source at the Ministry, 10 million citizens will benefit from this measure.

The plan is to be completed within three years. This will include the development of the existing water stations; the establishment of new water-works and the renovations of the present networks.

The source said that the National Authority for Potable Water and Sewerage has decided to purchase 100 small units for water purification to be distributed among villages and small districts.

The source added that 25 projects have been completed with the aim of increasing the potable water capacity in governorates. Moreover, water projects of West Qantara and Tanta are to be completed before the end of the present year. Similar projects are under way in Abshai and Fayyum, said the source.

Two condensers are being installed at el-Koseir on the Red Sea and a project is currently under way for adding a new line to Qena-Safaga water supply. Work is also expected to start early next year in Kaft, Tanta and Ashmun on water-works to provide areas deprived of such an amenity with potable water, said the source. — GSS