What Happens Next?

There is a sameness that characterizes life in and around the town of Damazin, the capital of Blue Nile Province in eastern Sudan. The white, hot dusty terrain is flat as far as the eye can see; the only relief is the block shaped dwellings that make up the town.

Damazin typifies a classic Moslem lifestyle, which has endured for centuries. The townspeople awake early to do their marketing while the sun is merciful. By midday, they return to shady resting places, moving only to perform the traditional five daily prayers.

A similar ritual of life is observed throughout the Blue Nile Province and northern Sudan. During the dry season, farmers like Hamid Khaliefa Jaroat, of Kenana who lives near the village of Gulam Alla about nine miles north of Damazin, prepare their

What's good for the country, according to the experts, may not be good for the little farmer. Many Africans view large -scale agriculture projects as death to the small landowners.

By Emmett George

fields for the planting that follows the late spring rains.

There are 20 people in Jaroat's household; each is responsible for preparing a certain amount of land for the planting. Each year it is the same. Jaroat plants the traditional sorghum (dura) and sesame crops and waits for the rain to make them grow. He never gives serious thought to rotating the crops, or to introducing new staples, or cash crops.

After the planting, the women resume the tedious task of hauling water to the villages. The men carry on a constant war against the termites and rats that raid their makeshift grain storage bins.

Down the road, Jaroat's Fulani

neighbor, Jaj Balwo, is supervising his family in an identical routine. Still further north at the village of Shanisha, Garm Alla Mustafa and his Gommose tribesmen also prepare for the spring rains.

Mustafa has assigned his family the job of cultivating five acres. Two and a half acres will be planted with sorghum, the rest with sesame. The plan is the same as it was last year and the year before that.

Throughout Blue Nile Province, the pattern has repeated itself for generations. The small farmer ekes out a meager living from traditional food crops. Since his survival is at stake, he sticks to

proven methods and resists experimenting with new crops or new techniques.

He lives almost exclusively on dura; only the most skillful farmer will risk crops such as tomatoes, potatoes, or maize. The common" diet of dura is supplemented with bird, fish, goat and, on special occasions, beef.

But in startling contrast to this simple, unchanging way of life, modern, mechanized farming. largely funded by outside interests, is coming to Sudan, and its advent spells trouble for Jaroat, Balwo, Mustafa and the

The growing emphasis on large scale agriculture in Sudan reflects the government's desire to turn huge sections of the vast territory to food production.

Adding fuel to this way of thinking is a multi - million dollar

(Continued on Page 20)



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