

EDITORIAL

Twenty years ago, the Israel Lands Council introduced capitalization into the annual leasing fees of the Israel Lands Administration. On the one hand, the system aimed to minimize the lessees' bureaucratic dependence on the Administration and free it of annual leasehold payments, transfer levies and periodic re-evaluations; on the other, it was to maximize current leasing income to meet Treasury needs and demands for resources to acquire new land. The capitalized fees indeed injected large sums into the Treasury coffers, but this was not matched by the purchase of new land. The system became entrenched, though it nevertheless elicited sporadic criticism, namely that for the sake of reducing the administrative burden and averting friction with the lessees, the Israel Lands Administration had forfeited future income from the rising price of developing land. The system was applied initially to public housing sites with fully utilized building rights and in the course of time was extended to almost all other areas of activity within the Administration's purview and, this, without seriously studying the value of capitalization as regards costs and benefits.

The current issue of **Karka** opens with an article by **Gideon Witkon**, a former director of the Israel Lands Administration, on **The Capitalization of Leasing Fees**. The author analyzes the system of capitalization and the uses made of it, and calls for an examination of all the Administration's financial management techniques.

In **Reflections on Land Policy**, **Ze'ev Tzur**, a member of the Israel Lands Council, notes the importance of national priorities in Government policy for balanced activity in population distribution. To his mind, the biennial leasing fees are the Administration's way of adapting to the conditions of the real estate market.

Further to articles in previous issues and discussions by the land policy forum on Comprehensive National scheme for Building and Development for Absorption of Immigrants - NOS 31, economist **Daniel Morgenstern**, in **Israel in the Year 2000: Urban Paradise or Concrete Purgatory**, faults the plan and calls for a re-examination of its underlying principles.

In his article **Land Use in the Northern Negev - Open Season**, Tel Aviv University's **Prof. Elisha Efrat** condemns the use made of State land reserves as the dumping ground for noxious wastes and health hazards.

Dr. Dov Gavish and **Prof. Ruth Kark** of the Hebrew University provide an historical account of the **Cadastral Mapping of Palestine, 1858-1928**, analyzing the changes and innovations that have been made in local land surveying and mapping. In the view of the authors, a modern land registration system was created at the end of the period in question, based on statutory maps. According to the article, by 1948 the Mandate Government had completed surveys for an area of only five million dunams or some 20 per cent of the