

K F A R H A N A S I
November 1950

The population of Kfar Hanasi is now 233 people, including 185 chaverim and candidates, 45 children and 3 parents of chaverim. The main bulk of chaverim is from Gt. Britain, apart from about 12 chaverim from France and some from Australia. Kfar Hanasi has become the concentration point for chalutzim from Australia and there is a small but continuous flow of Australian chaverim to the kibbutz.

MESHEK

From the point of view of the economic development, Kfar Hanasi has its own specific difficulties to face, apart from the usual ones which every settlement has to contend with. We spent a year in Mansura, a quarter of a mile away from Kfar Hanasi and there in the course of the year we built up many important branches of our economy. The move, necessitated by security considerations held back the development of these branches for at least half a year.

Our land is of very good quality but is, at present, covered with stones. The economy can be properly secured only after we have cleared our area of stones. This will give us several dunam of good land in about five or six years' time. Our whole plans are therefore based on continuous stone clearing.

Up till now, there has only been dry farming, there being no water for irrigation. This has retarded three very important branches of agriculture - fodder crops, market gardening and fruit cultivation. Next year, we hope to have the necessary water, through the Government irrigation scheme for the Galil, and we are already planning the new branches on the assumption of water for irrigation.

For all that, the branches of the kibbutz are already fairly varied. The main activities can be divided into three headings: Farming, Industry and Services. Farming is, of course, the basic aspect of the kibbutz economy, both from the point of view of the numbers of chaverim employed and of the development of the country in general. The main job of the chalutz is to bring new, unworked areas of land under cultivation. Kfar Hanasi has mixed farming, including firstly, sikkul (stone-clearing), which goes on all the time, Falcha (winter crops), Mispo (fodder crops), Gan Yerek (market gardening), Livestock (cows, sheep and chickens), Mataim (fruit trees) and Brechot dagim (fish ponds).

Sikkul is carried on continuously. This year a lot of help was given by the Keren Kayemet who sent labour and also eight tractors to aid us in the work. The job of stone-clearing is a long-term, monotonously hard task which will take years to complete. Up till now we have cleared enough to have about 1200 dunam of land under the plough in the region of Kfar Hanasi itself.

Falcha is probably the most important side of farming, employing sixteen people and six tractors. Because the Kibbutz lands are so stony, we have been granted 4000 dunam in other areas to cultivate. This land is in two sections - one in the Hule region, and one near Affula in Emek Yisrael. The fact that these areas are far away from home imposes extra hardships, both economic and personal. The additional haulage involved in carrying seed and bringing the produce from the falcha lands takes away most of the profit from the branch. The chaverim who work in this section have to live away from home many months in the year, being able to get back only for Shabbat. However, wheat growing being so essential for Israel, these difficulties cannot be allowed to interfere with wheat production.

The Gan Yerek is not yet fully developed because of the lack of water for irrigation. There are about 100 dunam under cultivation, the crops being tomatoes, water melons, honey melons, spinach, radishes, carrots, garlic and onions. The crops have been fairly good, but without irrigation there is only one harvest a year, whereas with irrigation there could probably be three.

Mispe is a small branch being used for internal needs only. The size is regulated by the number of animals so that we grow enough green fodder to feed the animals of the kibbutz. With irrigation this branch will be developed.

The Refet (dairy branch) is developing quickly. The first permanent cowshed has just been completed. It can hold 60 cows and attached to it is a bull pen. At present there are 40 animals, 10 of which are being milked, and there are 30 calves. Next to the refet is a large silo tower, one of the first in the country. In the Spring, the refet will supply enough milk both to sell to T'nuve and to satisfy the needs of the kibbutz itself.

Our sheep have proved extremely successful, even though conditions are not of the best, the sheep still being in a temporary building without proper facilities. There are 300 sheep. When the permanent building is ready and this year's lambing finished, the number will increase to 500. The first 12 lambs have already been born. Sheep are reared for their milk, which is free from tuberculosis and therefore important for people who suffer this illness, which is fairly serious in Israel. The milk yield of Kfar Hanasi's sheep was very high last year. Of course, the wool comes in useful as well - a very rough wool, not suitable for fine yarns, and used mainly in rug making.

Chickens are a problem owing to the shortage of the concentrated feeding stuffs which they require. We have 1500 birds, but hope to extend the chicken coop and double the number of birds during the course of the year.

Mataim, like market gardening, is a branch which depends on irrigation. With the expectation of water in the next year, preparations are under way for a small vineyard and orchard.

The brechet dagim are in their initial stages. They are not situated at home but in the Hule, one and a half hours journey away from Kfar Hanasi. The chaverim working there live there all week returning home for Shabbat. The brechet are 250 dunams in area. The first batch of fish has been put in and we are feeding them. The first harvest of fish is expected for Pesach.

Industry in the kibbutz is of two kinds. There are those branches which service and maintain the machinery and installations of the kibbutz, and there is the foundry which is our income-earning industry.

As for the servicing side, we have our own building group which, with the help of Makibbutz Hameuchad has erected most of the buildings which stand at present. Most chaverim are housed in wooden prefabricated houses, some imported from Sweden, some made in Israel. Work has just begun on concrete houses but is being held up by the general shortage of materials in the country. Soon our building group will begin work on the childrens' institution which the kibbutz is opening in the summer.

The electrical branch is just installing our new 50 kilowatt generator which will supply all the electricity the kibbutz needs at present, both for lighting and power. We also have a reserve 25 kilowatt generator. Electric lighting reached us for the first time on Rosh Hashana, after we received a gift of electric cable from the parents of our French chaverim.

There is also a carpentry branch which does all the woodwork needed for building, such as doors, window frames, etc. Shortly, when proper machinery arrives, the branch will make furniture for the chaverim.

The small garage maintains our own tractors and tenders, and the actual workshop attached to the foundry does all the repair of our own machinery and implements.

The main industrial undertaking is the non-ferrous metal foundry. Industrial development is felt to be very important enabling us to employ the many skilled people who come to us from Britain and to build the settlement on a wide enough basis to include people with varied interests and abilities. The foundry and workshops attached employ 20 people. It has already received large contracts from Hamashbir. When the new machinery is here (due to arrive as part of the American loan to Israel of last year), we shall enlarge our scope considerably. A detailed lay out for a much larger foundry has already been worked out for us in England. The real difficulty is the shortage of raw materials, which is affecting us seriously. The foundry and workshops are still down at Mansura which naturally causes its own difficulties.

The vast majority of the bachurot in the kibbutz work in the various services, such as kitchen, clothes store, and childrens' care. Those working in the kitchen are badly handicapped by the lack of modern equipment and facilities. It is no easy job to feed

three meals a day to 200 people when you have to cook on primus stoves and heat all the water for washing up on primuses.

Naturally, not all the concentration is on the economic side of the kibbutz - cultural activities are carried on all the time. As we have many new chaverim who do not know Hebrew and as many of the older chaverim still need a lot more depth in their Hebrew knowledge, our main concern is still the teaching of Hebrew. We have received a madrich for a few months, whose task is to give intensive lessons. The Vaadat Hatarbut also tries to cater for varied tastes in general culture, and has organised a choir, dramatic group, Hebrew newspaper reading circle, and an evening course for the study of kibbutz economics. The kibbutz received the gift of a film projector from France and films, usually very old ones, are shown once a fortnight. Besides this, there are regular visits by lecturers, singers and groups of musicians. Many of these people come through the heavy rain and mud of the winter to help in our cultural progress.

During the next three weeks, the first group of Noar is coming to Kfar Hanasi to receive Hachshara. The group is made up of 40 Yemenite children, all new Olim, aged about 14. It will be our job to train them in all branches of work and at the same time to continue their general education.

The Mosed Yeladim (Childrens' Institution) should be mentioned in more detail. Youth Aliya has asked us to open in the kibbutz an institution for orphans. They will come to us aged about 10, be brought up and educated to the best of our ability. Youth Aliya, of course, will give us some help towards the building costs:- we have to supply teachers and matrons. The first 50 children are due to arrive after Pesach, and the institution will cater eventually for 100 children.

Finally, a note about Beth Michael, the cultural centre being built by the Zionist Federation of Gt. Britain and Ireland, in the name of President Weizman's late son, killed while flying with the R.A.F. during the second World War. The building plans are being completed in detail. We are discussing with President Weizman's staff the date to be fixed for the laying of the foundation stone.

This report will, it is hoped, give a detailed picture of the development in all sides of the life of Kfar Hanasi, and help to give an idea of the way in which this group of English chalutzim is developing into a strong unit in the chain of Israel's settlements.