

IBN SAUD

Over the refineries of Ras Tanura, high up in the Persian Gulf, flew that wise friend of Britain and elder statesman of the Middle East, King Ibn Saud, monarch of much-coveted, oil-bearing Saudi Arabia. The King was paying his first visit since 1939 to the Arabian-American Oilfields. In 1933 Ibn Saud leased to the company 400,000 square miles ^{of territory} - nearly double the area of France. Families of officials and engineers stationed at Dharran, administrative centre of Arabian-American Oil, were presented. One of the younger members of the party must have been a born democrat.

At the royal camp the King returned American hospitality by giving a banquet - quite unrestricted by meat coupons.

Under This desert country, whose Arabs prepare feasts in the same way as two-thousand years ago, flows at least half the potential oil-supply of the world. And as America's own oilfields may run dry within a lifetime, friendship with Ibn Saud means a great deal to the United States. As for the king, it makes him monarch, not of a barren wilderness, but of a land immensely rich.... Till atom power supersedes oil Saudi Arabia stays in the spotlight of power politics. With the ageless desert, time has caught up.