

SPECIAL FOR IRAQ

KING FEISAL OPENS GIANT PIPELINE

Today a giant oilfield lies near Kirkuk, for beneath the desert are vast sources of oil untapped for centuries. In 1950 the Iraq Petroleum Company began a pipeline from Kirkuk - its destination Banias 556 miles away. Across the parched desert British, American, Syrian and Iraqi Pipelayers worked side by side with the very latest machinery, much of it specially built for the huge enterprise.

Speedily the pipeline grew towards Syria and the Mediterranean. And then, early this year, the last section was put into place and the rich oil began to flow. Now, to celebrate the opening of the pipeline, guests and officials of the Iraq Petroleum Company fly in to Kirkuk from Britain by a specially chartered "Comet" airliner. Managing Director, Mr. H.S. Gibson, is here for the occasion that will be made even more memorable when (later) Iraq's young King Feisal the Second will officially declare the pipeline opened.

During their stay, the visitors, who have come from Europe and the Middle East will see for themselves how the Iraqis are making use of their share of the company's profits. New Houses and schools, health and irrigation schemes - such is the wealth that the new pipeline brings to Iraq.

His Excellency Nuri Pasha El Said, the former Prime Minister, is among the distinguished personalities who will be attending the ceremony. The following day sees the arrival, by plane from Bagdad, of King Feisal and his uncle, the Prince Regent, His Royal Highness Amir Abdul Illah.

The seventeen-year-old King inspects the Guard of Honour, before he attends the opening ceremony.

The pumping station is bedecked with flags and bunting for the royal visitor, and the rich costumes add further gaiety to the colourful scene.

All who are there welcome the young King as he arrives at the station. With His Majesty is the Prince Regent.

Chairman of the Iraq Petroleum Company, Admiral of the Fleet, Sir John Cunningham, is presented to the King. In 1935, His Late Majesty King Ghazi attended a similar ceremony at Kirkuk and opened the original 12-inch pipeline from the oilfield. But today is an occasion of even greater significance to the people of Iraq, for the new 30-inch pipe to Banias will treble the output of oil to the markets of the world and bring greater prosperity to the land from which it flows. In celebration

of this triumphal occasion, the Iraq Petroleum Company is donating £50,000 to the country's charities.

Now the actual ceremony of inauguration takes place and His Majesty turns the wheel which lets the oil flow through the giant pipeline. Sections of the pipe have been in use for many months, consequently it was not easy to fix an exact date for the official opening. But November the 18th was decided upon as being the date when engineers would have built up a powerful pressure throughout the whole length of the pipe, and its performance today is not far short of the eventual target.

The ceremony is over and the King leaves for the inauguration luncheon. The flow of oil on its long journey to Banias depends on the efficiency of the pumping stations set up along the route. The finest equipment available has been installed to speed the quarter of a million tons of oil in the pipe to the sea. Each station propels about 65,000 tons nearly 140 miles. Many of the men working this equipment are Iraqis and Syrians who learned their skill from the Company's engineers who pioneered this mighty enterprise.

Over at the Inauguration Hall (a newly built canteen seating 500), it is again a scene of colour and bright decoration. Sir John Cunningham waits to receive King Feisal for the luncheon.

Now the royal car arrives outside the hall --- His Majesty's visit to Kirkuk today is yet another example of the goodwill that exists between his country and the Iraq Petroleum Company. At a cost of 41-million-pounds the pipeline is completed, and from Kirkuk to Banias the oil now flows. 165,000 tons of steel pipe carry the precious fluid that means prosperity to the country from which it springs - yet only the scarred earth tells where these riches now flow. Beneath the desert lies the fulfilment of men's dreams, men of foresight and imagination who thought not of themselves but of the people their enterprise could serve. From Kirkuk to Banias --- to the ends of the earth.