

Addis Ababa Emerging as Probable Capital of Africa

By WILBUR G. LANDREY
United Press International
Addis Ababa—(UPI)—This capital of Ethiopia is likely to become the "capital of Africa" as well. The event will be another triumph for Emperor Haile Selassie—"King of kings, the elect of God and conquering lion of Judah."

month. It already is the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which is housed in a magnificent marble hall opposite the emperor's Jubilee palace. It depends on with whom you talk in Ethiopia whether the future is dark or bright under the emperor's imperial rule. But everyone agrees that the emperor, a 73-year-old monarch in a continental which runs to youthful Republicans, scored an impressive victory for himself and

for Ethiopia at the summit conference here last May which drafted the OAU charter. Emperor Credited It has he who insisted that the 30 African heads of state overrule the timidity of their foreign ministers and draft the charter here. Both foreign diplomats and Ethiopians credited him with the conference's success. And that success has helped silence allegations at home, mostly youthful, that Ethiopia is moving ahead too

slowly while the rest of Africa passes her by. Haile Selassie's country has a history of 3,000 years, an area one and one-third the size of Texas and an estimated population of 20 million. Its soil is rich enough to feed 10 times that number and its scenery is spectacularly beautiful. Its capital, Addis Ababa (the new flower), is an increasingly modern city of 450,000 whose streets are lined with shiny walls of corrugated iron, hiding both new construction and old eyesores alike. It has fine hotels and restaurants but, at night, hyenas from the nearby hills still slink as scavengers through its streets. Back to Solomon Haile Selassie has ruled for 47 years, from 1916 to 1930 as regent and from 1930 as emperor of a dynastic line that legend says originated from the meeting of King Solomon with the Queen of Sheba. In the painted story of Solomon and Sheba which tourists buy to decorate their walls, Ethiopia has perhaps the first "comic strip."

More than any other emperor, Haile Selassie has dragged Ethiopia forward, after centuries of isolation, into an era which knows the wheel and the airplane. He still rules as well as reigns, sometimes even to small details—and hence the impatience of some of the younger civil servants. A slight, bearded figure in full dress uniform, who feeds pet lions by hand, he rules with what diplomats here regard as consummate skill, balancing this group against that and holding Ethiopia to-

gether as no other man could. The solitary negus who reaped the conscience of the world when the Italians invaded his country in 1936 is likely to be known as one of Ethiopia's greatest emperors. Still Illiterate But illiteracy is still 95 per cent and per capita income is only \$47 a year. Ironically, it has been the emperor's efforts to advance education that have led to much of the criticism of himself and the men around him. It comes from the youth of

the university and some of the younger civil servants who have been educated abroad. The most hot-headed echo the words of General Mengistu Neway, who was hanged for leading a revolt of the imperial bodyguard two and a half years ago: "Ethiopia has been standing still while our African brothers are moving ahead in the struggle to overcome poverty." Ethiopia is not standing still. But the younger civil servants would like to see faster constitutional advance and many students believe economic progress could be faster as well. Elders Cite Post The answer of their elders is that they have forgotten or never knew what Ethiopia was like 20 years ago. Nor do the young intellectuals reflect the beliefs and values of the countryside outside Addis Ababa. One senior official tells the story of how he got an education: "I had to be 'exiled' abroad by the emperor to get an education at all over the opposition of my family."


In the middle rank of government officials, where the pressure for "reform" but not revolution becomes greater, a typical aspiration is for a full-fledged constitutional monarchy when the emperor dies. The crown prince is his eldest son, 50-year-old Asfawesen Haile Selassie. Now there are a prime minister, 16 ministers and a parliament composed of an elected Lower House and an appointed Upper House. The ministers are also appointed by the emperor and responsible to him. The education portfolio he holds himself. The armed forces of 25,000 men are offered by the country's elite and equipped by the United States with everything from ships and tanks to F-86 jet fighters. Armed Forces With a wary eye on Somalia and Egypt, 34 per cent of the Ethiopian budget goes for the armed forces and police. Balancing the regular army are 15,000 territorialists—tribal irregulars. Ethiopia is entering the second year of her second five-year plan, which started last July and will run until 1967. It calls for an increase of 4.6 per cent a year in gross national product and an investment of \$1,062,000,000. Over the past few years about a quarter of the government's budget has gone for economic development. Eighty-five per cent of the national product comes from agricultural crops grown by peasant tenant farmers and herdsmen who make up nearly 90 per cent of the population. Coffee is the largest export and the United States takes 70 per cent of it. Bu the biggest growths are scheduled for mining, industry and power.

There is potash and gold and exploration is hopefully going on for oil. The plan calls for a steel mill and an agreement has been concluded with Russia to build an oil refinery at the port of Assab. Remains Neutral Like most other African countries, Ethiopia tries to be "neutral" in the cold war. She does not yet recognize Communist China, although most diplomats predict she will eventually. In tacit return for an important radio relay station near Asmara, which is a vital link in American global communications, Ethiopia has received some \$114,000,000 in grants and loans from the United States during the past ten years, and another \$70 million worth of military aid. With more than 5,000 Americans in Ethiopia, it is one of the key American diplomatic posts on the continent. The United States has helped build roads in a country where the muddy tracks are sometimes as bad as those of medieval Europe or the pioneer American west. The United States has fostered agricultural education and health, financed new jets for the TW-operated airlines and sent 277 Peace Corps volunteers (one of whom put Andreoles and the Lion to music for the country's first musical comedy sung in Amharic). They helped double the number of students in secondary schools this year. Receives Aid Ethiopia gets other aid as well—from Russia, the World Bank, West Germany, Italy (war reparations), Sweden, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union has promised \$100 million nearly equal to aid from the United States—but only a fraction of that has been used. Ethiopia has been Christian since the third century after Christ and today about 40 per cent of its inhabitants are adherents of the official Ethiopian Orthodox church. Perhaps another 40 per cent are Moslem. Ethiopia's language is Amharic, the language of its dominant people. Most of the country is a temperate plateau—between 7,000 and 10,000 feet high, rent by tremendous gorges. Both to the east and west the plateau plunges thousands of feet to scorching deserts. It has elephant, buffalo, rhinoceros, giraffe, zebra, lion, leopard, cheetah, antelope, azelle, and in remote areas, shifitas (bandits). In the words of one American who struggled with crocodiles, lions and nature generally to help complete the recent survey of the blue Nile: "There are hazards here you don't normally run into in the United States."

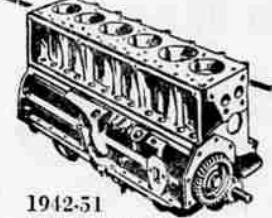
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