

20 ewes, 1 cow, 1 bullock, seeds in an amount of 625 kg potatoes, 50 kg legumes, 15 kg alfafa, 5 kg sesame, vegetable seeds for 5 dunums, 1 plow, hand tools (hoe, sickle, axe, shovel, rake), fodder for the animals, and manure for the land (UNRWA, 1956:181).

Clearly the conception of the settlement was one based on the notion of self-sufficient peasant farming with the aim of finding alternative mode of life to the crowded, and temporary refugee camps. However, the several failed attempts at community buildings in Marj Na'je (bureaucratically explained as due to the "inexperience of the settlers in irrigated farming") had its roots in three key problems which all those early projects failed to solve: one was the heterogenous origin of the refugees and their inability to form a cohesive cooperative farming unit along the lines conceived by the UNRWA planners. Second, a more serious flaw, was the uncertain conditions of tenure on the basis of which Marj Na'je farmers leased the land. Although state land was leased to members for 33 years for a nominal rent (10 fils per dunum and 50 fils for the house). The status of the farmer after the termination of the lease period was left undetermined. A third problem was the withdrawal of the refugee ration cards which UNRWA demanded as a condition for leasing the land and dwellings. This condition was highly resisted by the refugees, and in several cases led to their withdrawal from the project, in as much as it was symbolic of their forsaking their future rights in what was then seen as an impending settlement of their land rights in Palestine.

The problem of land tenure was rectified in 1955 when the third wave of farmers received leases obliging them to work the land for ten years after which they would receive title deeds and would return their ration cards to UNRWA (ibid.:182). During that period the refugee farmer had to operate the land himself, using his family's labour only and was subject