

ISRAEL UNIVERSITIES IN FOR HARD TIMES

Israel's seven universities and their 50,000 students are in for some difficult times beginning this year. The institutions will have to freeze all new building programs, increase tuition fees appreciably, eliminate some department and faculties, dismiss teachers and administrative personnel and cut all other expenses to the bone. Many students, who will not be able to afford the increased fees, may have to drop out.

This is the "pessimistic but realistic" estimate of Mr. Matityahu Adler, Chairman of the Committee of the General Directors of Israel's Institutions of Higher Learning for the past 13 years Director - General of Bar - Ilam, Israel's only religious - oriented university. The cutbacks, which the universities have already begun to implement this year, are necessitated mainly by the Government's decision to reduce sharply its support for Israel's universities. Until now this covered, together with allotments from the Jewish Agency, some 75% of university budgets.

The 1976/77 government allotment (beginning April 1) for Israel's institutions of higher learning will amount to about \$175m; nominally, a 5% increase over the previous year but actually a 17% - 20% decrease, Mr. Adler points out, because of Israel's annual inflation rate of at least 22%.

Since some 65% of the universities' budgets go for paying salaries to teachers, administrative and maintenance staffs, the main cuts will have to be made at their expense. The only way, therefore, in which the universities will be able to continue functioning effectively, Mr. Adler declared, is by increasing each person's work output without additional compensation.

At Bar - Ilam University, as part of the economy drive, two recently - established departments have already been closed down; arts and drama.

The most "painful" move dictated by the times, Mr. Adler says, will be a large increase in tuition fees. Today, tuition fees in the universities are relatively low, (about \$370), lower in fact than high school fees. In the latter case, however, a graded scale is used according to the parent's ability to pay. This can be tried at the universities but will be hard to implement since college education is not mandatory and the result, says Mr. Adler, is likely to be



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a drop off in enrollment beginning this coming fall. As it is, tuitions today contribute only 7% - 8% to the universities' budgets.

The only solution, the Bar - Ilam Director-General feels, will be to direct more scholarships towards the students with the least means and expand the alternatives of evening classes to enable students to support themselves at the same time. The other approach is to make every effort to increase contributions from abroad.

Since these are generally for building purposes and not for running costs, however, contributors will have to be convinced to redirect their funds as much as possible. The Government, which generally contributes 50% to building programs, has this year stopped allotments for all new building projects in the country's universities.

JERUSALEM (WNS) - - The Cabinet by majority vote, asked the Heth Committee on charter flights to reconvene and submit within two weeks clear practical proposals for the introduction of some charter flights into Israel on a trial basis.

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