

After the termination of Ottoman rule and the revived awareness of the political and economic implications of land ownership, the amassing of larger holdings became much more difficult. In contrast, a new trend set in which triggered the splitting of feudal holdings into ever smaller ones. This process was underlied mainly by the continual division of holdings among heirs, and by accelerated purchasing spurred by declining disparity among various income groups. As a result of these and other factors the number of large holdings (e.g. over 1000 donums) dropped sharply from 215 in 1953 to 30 in 1965 (see Table II-7). It is likely that their number has continued to decline since then, though probably at a slower pace.

Table (II-7)

Size groups (donums)	1953		1965	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	61,750	100.0	54,978	100.0
Less than 10	16,816	27.32	27,406	49.84
10 - 49	25,497	41.29	18,932	34.44
50 - 99	9,769	15.82	5,719	10.41
100 - 199	6,193	10.03	2,211	4.02
200 - 499	2,801	4.54	757	1.04
500 - 999	459	0.74	105	0.19
1000 - 1999	117	.19	26	1.05
2000 - 4999	59	0.10	4	0.01
5000 and over	39	0.06	-	-

Sources: 1. Statistical Yearbook, 1957, (Amman: Department of Statistics) p 67.

2. Population and Employment in the Agricultural Sector, 1967 (Amman: Department of Statistics, 1968) Supplement No 1.

Despite a vigorous trend towards the splitting of large holdings into smaller ones, available evidence still points to a pronounced concentration of large areas in the hands of few owners. Table (II-8) shows that while 30 percent of all owners account for 10 percent of owned land, 12 percent of them own 66 percent of the total area in the form of holdings of 50 donums and above. Although this is a clear symptom of inequitable land distribution, the tangible consequences of this problem do not carry a relatively similar weight, since diversity of ownership is most pronounced in land of inferior quality. Unfortunately, the data in Table (II-8) does not make distinctions in land quality. At any rate, it is safe to conclude that land ownership is somewhat inequitably distributed, and the extent of the problem and its actual consequences on the process of agricultural development deserve further study.

Table (II - 8)

Distribution of agricultural land by size of holding

Size of unit (donums)	Total area ( donums)	Percent of total area	Percent of total owners	Number of owners
Total	2,091,000	100	100	58,084
1 - 5	24,800	1	16	9,167
5 - 20	195,300	9	23	18,775
20 - 50	499,700	24	30	17,215
50 - 100	579,500	28	4	8,025
100+	791,800	38	8	4,902

Source: Monthly Statistics for the Administrated Territories, No 8, 1971, (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1971)

The trend towards splitting of holdings into ever smaller sizes seems to have gone much beyond the point of diminishing returns, as could be inferred from Table (II - 9) which indicates a sharp