

Sharett summarized IG position by saying there are two questions: (1) with respect to land, it is a question of fact as to whether Arab lands in Israel are affected (Embtel 356);² (2) with respect to water, there has not as yet been any diversion and will be none until completion of canal, so no complaint can be made on that score at this time. Sharett said portion of project lying within demilitarized zone is major piece of construction and will take many months.

Sharett stated that IG has not stopped work on canal; that complication arose after work had been underway and Bennike did not specify date by which work should be stopped; that IG had offered to satisfy his doubts on factual side; and this discussion still continuing. Sharett said at luncheon with Bennike on Tuesday latter claimed IG had worked on Arab land though admitted it was not now doing so. Sharett suggested they go over pertinent documents together. Bennike replied his men looking into them.

Sharett says if at end of this discussion there is no agreement IG may appeal to Security Council and, if it does, it will then have to decide whether to stop work pending Council consideration.

RUSSELL

² Not printed, but see footnote 3, Document 574.

No. 682

784A.13/10-778: Telegram

The Chargé in Israel (Russell) to the Department of State

SECRET

TEL AVIV, October 7, 1953—4 p. m.

413. At casual meeting Tel Aviv last evening, Prime Minister asked me "When is your government going to stop boycotting Jerusalem?" Question appeared to be rhetorical. He went on to say in friendly but vigorous fashion: "Your present policy is blasphemy. Christ himself came to Jerusalem. So did Dulles, a religious man. Other religions, to be sure, have interest in Jerusalem but those who launched them were Jews. Reason given by Western powers for not wanting move of Foreign Ministry to Jerusalem was that it would increase tension. That would mean Arabs would determine Jerusalem policy. Jews have been in Jerusalem for thousands of years and government is thereby right. Government of Israel, not just particular ministries or branches of the government, but government itself, has been in Jerusalem since 1949. Therefore no basis for change in Western powers policy because of move of For-