Conclusion

The land reform in the four years between 1962 and 1966 brought about considerable change in the social, political and economical life of the people of Iran. Prior to 1962 the landowners owned a large proportion of the cultivated land and were therefore dominant throughout the country. The relationship between the landowners and peasants was regulated by cropsharing agreement. The first stage of the land reform altered the distribution of landownership and the second stage brought to an end the relationship between the landowners and the peasants based on crop sharing agreement.

Before the introduction of land reform the peasants lived under unfavourable conditions and they never believed that it was possible to change their conditions. But after the Land Reform of 1962 the peasants began to feel that their voice counted for something. The land reform was essentially pragmatic.

Now the peasant was convinced that the reform represented

   Ibid. p. 348
a genuine attempt to secure for him a better condition. He became sure that the change in his condition was a practical possibility. So he gained new self-confidence and independence.

Economically and agriculturally the effects of land reform could not be so easily conceived. However, the land transferred to the peasants was better cultivated ensuring increase in produce, increase in the use of fertilizers, and greater diversification of crop. In most of the land reform villages there was reduction in selling of crop and indebtedness and an improvement in social and economic conditions. The peasants put in extra effort to raise their standard of living. Their were community efforts for the provision of schools, baths, roads etc.

The peasants no doubt had not been benefited by the land reform equally. Those to whom land was transferred under the first stage received better treatment than those who had their lands settled under the second stage. Moreover, the number of the peasants directly

1. Ibid. p. 348.
2. Ibid. pp. 348-49.
affected was much less than the number not affected. But as living conditions in villages improved and oppression lessened, all the peasants had benefited, though the benefit was only marginal.

A number of problems still remained to be tackled. One of which was the minimum size of the holding. It is a difficult problem in Iran. The quantity of the land, the availability of water, the method of irrigation etc which vary widely in different parts of the country, all affect the question of the size of the holding. The land reform did not do anything in this respect excepting the halting of further fragmentation. The other complicated problem was the consolidation of individual peasant holding. The holding of a peasant consisted of several plots of land situated in different parts of the village. The quality of the land and irrigation facility vary considerably. So the idea of compulsory consolidation was abandoned to avoid opposition and hostility among the peasants. However, in a few cases consolidation had been carried out. In due course with the spread of mechanization, increased use of fertilizers and better irrigation, the benefit of

1. Ibid. p 340.
consolidation would be realised.

Although the peasants on the land which had been transferred to them or settled had become better off, still poverty exists which is mainly due to lack of water and which has been the limiting factor in agricultural development.

Despite some shortcomings it may be said that the land reform generated a movement of change in the country side. It is to be seen in the great demand of education for children. It is also expressed in a new sense of purpose, independence, and self-reliance of the peasants and above all in the emergence of leaders in the cooperative societies.

The basic need of the peasants almost everywhere was short term credit. The cooperative societies did an excellent job in providing this. A sense of loyalty to the societies had developed among their members, and there was some measure of responsibility for the grant of credit and its repayment.

The main function of the cooperative societies was

1. Ibid. p. 351.
to grant short term credit. But there were instances in which it was used for long term ends, for the purchase of pumps and tractors and sinking of wells. While these activities were worth encouraging, the confusion of two types of credit was to create difficulties and confusion.

The minister of agriculture, General Riahi promised a third stage of Land Reform on January 2, 1966. The aims were (i) an increase in production to provide foodstuffs and raw material for industry (ii) a rise in production per head of the peasant population in order to improve their conditions of life by self-help and cooperation, (iii) a stabilization of food price by increased production and marketing.

The third stage was a continuation of the first and the second stage of the land reform. But its discussion falls beyond the scope of my view.

It was realised from the beginning that the success of land reform depended on the increase in the production and this would be achieved by creating an

1. Ibid. p. 353.
2. Ibid. p. 354.
independent peasantry and by developing a cooperative movement which would provide credit and marketing facilities. But as the land reform progressed a kind of sympathy towards it developed in government circles. By 1963 there was to appear a new credit policy which was to divert the funds from the land reform and cooperative movement to private investment in agriculture aiming at increase in production. While increase in production was important because without it the standard of living of the peasant could not be improved, it would have been a mistake if the government were to concentrate on the question of production excluding the other aspects of the land reform. Persian agriculture was likely to continue to depend largely on the production of the peasant holding. On these grounds it would have been desirable to foster the confidence of the peasants through the land reform and cooperative societies.

Ms Anne Lamont concludes her discussion which is summarized as follows:

"the first stage of Land Reform marked a genuine change in the political and social life of Persia. It".

1 Ibid. p. 355.
nims were clear and unambiguous and its operations, on the whole, rapid and effective. The second stage was not merely or even mainly a consolidation of the ground already won; it was rather a weakening of the original purpose. But although its aims were to some extent equivocal, in those districts where its implementation was rapid and vigorous progress continued to be made particularly in the co-operative movement, where it was not the farmers began to lose confidence because their hopes were disappointed. It is of profound importance that the government should give practical recognition to the aims of the first stage and begin the full confidence of the peasants. Without this there will be no rise in production over the country as a whole.

After 1966, the second stage of the land reform had been officially completed except in those districts which had not yet been registered or the estates whose title was disputed.

Attention was being increasingly directed to the first stage.
full exploitation of the agricultural resources of the country. In this regard irrigation was of paramount importance. Consequently large dams are being built. On Oct 1, 1967, the nationalisation of all water resources was announced but in the absence of detailed plans and effective means of implementation the effect of the new plan created uncertainty and discouragement.

The first step taken under the third stage was to increase the output by mechanisation. As such on Dec. 26, 1967 a law was passed by the National Assembly and on Jan. 16, 1968 by the senate for the establishment of agriculture cooperation. The idea was to abolish the fragmentation of holdings and to facilitate irrigation and mechanisation. Those holding land in a district where the corporation is set up hand their land over the corporation and in its place receive a share in it. They have no responsibility for cultivation and are employed as agricultural labour. Some 15 or 16 corporations were established in districts in which good land with adequate irrigation facility was available. There was strong feeling of hostility among the peasants towards the idea of the corporation. The main

1. Ibid. p 357
2. Ibid. p. 358.
reason was that the corporation were to be set up in
districts in which good land and adequate water were
available and not in dry villages.

The second step was the passage of a bill by the
National Consultative Assembly on Oct. 1/ 1968 for the
abolition of tenancies except in charitable Waqf and sale
of the land to the occupying peasants. In the case of
rents of land belonging to landowners subject to the first
stage, this was a desirable step.

In order to have better production the ministry
of Agriculture was reorganized and three new ministries
were created in Oct 1967: the ministry of natural
resources, the ministry of agricultural products and
counter goods and the ministry of land reform and rural
cooperation and the last ministry incorporated the former
land reform organization and the Central Organisation for
Rural Cooperation (CORC). The corporation of CORC in the
ministry of land reform was detrimental to the growth of
rural cooperation movement. However, by the spring of
1965, 8657 societies with a membership of 1,105,402 (eleven
1 Ibid., p. 359.
2 Ibid., p. 360.
1 lakh: five thousand four hundred and two. The increase in the capital, membership and number of societies was partly because a small percentage of every new loan was put to the share capital of each member, and partly because the number of peasants eligible for membership had greatly increased.

However, the societies achieved a great degree of success. First, in respect of provision of credit, the general experience was that the loans provided by them were larger than the advances formerly provided by the landowners. Second, with regard to irrigation, the peasants to whom land was transferred showed a tendency to maintain flow of the qanats and increased their flow by regular cleaning them. Much work on qanats and irrigation channels was done by the members of societies with the loans from the societies. Third, with regard to management and good farming practices, excellent work was done in the sale of fertilizers and improved seeds. In the year 1967-68 some 1,000 tons of fertilizers were sold through the societies and over 15 lakh kg. of improved seeds and over fifty five lakh kg. of local seeds were sold by the societies.

1 Ibid. pp. 262-63.
In short, the success of the land reform during its early duration had been considerable. A considerable portion of the total cultivated land was transferred to the peasants. The social and political power of the landowners was reduced. The levy of dues and services from the peasants was abandoned. The peasants were thus been liberated from the bondage of their masters who were the landowners. The cooperative movement made tremendous success. They were fostering a spirit of self-help and independence and encouraging a sense of responsibility. This was the great achievement of the Persian land reform.

1. Ibid. pp. 365-66.