

\$400,000

'No' by
villagers

Refusal by a group of villagers affected by the High Island Water scheme to leave their homes has cost the Government \$400,000.

The Government paid an extra \$200,000 to the contractor so he would have four blocks of flats available for the villagers by October 15, 1973.

The contractor accomplished this and was paid his bonus. But the villagers refused to budge.

So the Government has been paying a security firm another \$200,000 to protect the empty blocks till the villagers move in.

They have now agreed to do so next month.

The incident was brought to light by the Director of Audit, Mr G. E. Lyth, in his annual report.

In reply, the Finance Branch of the Colonial Secretariat said the decision to offer the bonus to the contractor to speed up work on the blocks was made in the hope of persuading the villagers to leave their homes sooner.

The villagers refused for over a year, the Finance Branch noted, but had now agreed to move into the new blocks next month.