

# *The Indus Waters Settlement*

ON SEPTEMBER 19, 1960, Prime Minister Shri Jawarharlal Nehru of India and President Mohammed Ayub Khan of Pakistan met in Karachi and signed the Indus Waters Treaty 1960, bringing to an end the long-standing problem between India and Pakistan of the sharing of the waters of the Indus River and its tributaries.\*

The Treaty formalizes that part of a proposal made by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in February 1954 under which India was to use the waters of the three eastern tributaries of the Indus — the Sutlej, Ravi and Beas Rivers. The waters of the two western tributaries, the Chenab and Jhelum Rivers, and of the Indus itself were allocated to Pakistan. Dams, canals and irrigation works costing approximately \$1 billion will be financed from an Indus Basin Development Fund to which Canada has pledged \$22.1 million over a ten-year period, subject to Parliamentary approval. Other contributors to the Fund are Australia, the Federal Republic of Germany, New Zealand, Pakistan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. An agreement signed in Karachi by the representatives of the contributing countries and the Bank establishes this Fund and emphasizes the importance of a settlement of the Indus waters problem from the point of view both of the economic development of the area and of the promotion of peace and stability therein.

## **The Indus System**

All the rivers of the Indus basin have their source in or near the high Himalayas and together they comprise one of the largest river systems of the world. They flow through the Punjab (the central and northeastern section of the plains of West Pakistan and Northwestern India), then join the Indus River before emptying into the Arabian Sea, some 1,200 to 1,800 miles from their source. The three eastern rivers run from India to Pakistan and the three western rivers from the territories of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan.

Since early history, irrigation has been practised in this region. In order to conserve the flood waters and provide for the long drought period, a pattern of headworks and canals has been gradually developed, until today it serves nearly 30 million acres of the Indus basin and supports about 40 million people in Pakistan and 10 million in India. One of the consequences of the 1947 partition of the Indian sub-continent was that the border between India and Pakistan was drawn across this irrigated area, leaving many of the headworks in India with their canals and other irrigation outlets in Pakistan.

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\*For a comprehensive explanation of the causes and negotiation of this dispute, see External Affairs Volume XI, Number 11, November 1959, page 366.