

This request created problems since Canadian defence and industrial requirements made it difficult to allocate the substantial amount of iron and steel required in the face of domestic and international shortages at that time. However, because of the importance of the scheme to Pakistan it was agreed that the iron and steel could be spared. Consultants were chosen to design the plant and to survey possible sites in Pakistan, in conjunction with Pakistan officials and engineers.

The site chosen was in the north-west section of what was then called the Province of West Punjab; close to where the Indus River comes rushing out of the Salt Range Mountains into the Plains of the Punjab and to the north of a large, semi-desert, but potentially cultivable area called the Thal. Plans had been made and carried out to some extent for the irrigating of this large area for the increased production of food grains, the settlement of refugees from India, and for the establishment of planned towns and secondary industry throughout the area. All this meant that cement would be needed to build canals, roads, houses and factory buildings as well as barns and other agricultural buildings.

The plant site was conveniently close to the Indus River, where sufficient water was assured; it was also adjacent to the Salt Range, massive craggy, barren hills rising 3,000 feet above the plain, which contained ample supplies of gypsum, limestone and coal, all necessary for the production of cement.

An internationally-known Danish firm was commissioned to design the cement plant while fabrication and supervision of construction and erection were placed in the hands of Canadian Overseas Projects Limited, a newly-formed consortium of Canadian companies established to facilitate the undertaking by Canada of large-scale industrial projects abroad. The members of this consortium were The Dominion Bridge Company, Canadian General Electric Company Limited, H. G. Acres and Company Limited, and Fraser Brace Limited.

In the late summer of 1953, the first Canadian engineers, technicians and their families moved from Canada to the remote and arid site in the Punjab where the cement plant was to be built, near the small village of Daudkhel. They were joined by a larger group of Pakistan engineers, technicians, clerical staff and skilled and semi-skilled labour. An Italian contractor was appointed by the Pakistan Government to be responsible for construction. The group took on an international aspect, comprising Pakistanis, Canadians, Danes and Italians. A housing colony for the future workers at the cement plant was built under the direction of a German architect employed by the Pakistan Government. The Canadian supervisory staff of C.O.P.L. has been working in close conjunction with officials of the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation, the autonomous agency of the Pakistan Government under which the plant was built. Because of the difficulty of finding experienced technicians in Pakistan to run the plant completely, it is expected that two or three experts from Canada will be employed for a short time under the technical assistance scheme of the Colombo Plan to assist in the operation of the plant and to supervise the training of the necessary Pakistani staff.

In November 1955, Mr. L. B. Pearson, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, visited the plant while it was under construction. He was shown