

was an essential first step towards "the realization of the ultimate physical modifications to the river which will unlock its great potential service to the region". The project will be carried out on the general lines set down in Lt. Col. Andrews' report.

There were a number of reasons for deciding that an aerial survey of the Mekong Basin would constitute an effective Canadian contribution to the economic development of Southeast Asia. Foremost among these was the need to increase the food production of the area substantially in the very near future. It has become evident in recent years that the rapidly advancing economic development of the area is resulting in a much greater demand for food. Economists and agriculturalists agree that the expansion of agricultural development must keep pace with economic and industrial development if serious food shortages and foreign-exchange problems are to be avoided. The Mekong River development project was specifically designed to expand agricultural production in one of the world's major rice-producing areas, by means of flood control and guided irrigation planning.

Moreover, member countries of the Colombo Plan are anxious to encourage national development projects in Southeast Asia that will take into account the interests of the region as a whole. The Mekong project is a good example of a co-operative endeavour that will yield benefits to more than one country in the region. Indeed, because the Lower Mekong River Basin is one of the relatively uncongested areas of South and Southeast Asia (with a population density of only one-quarter that of India, China, Java or Japan), it is likely to be one of the areas to which the rest of the region will look for an expansion of food supplies to satisfy the requirements of rapidly growing populations elsewhere.

The agreement covering Canadian participation in the Mekong Project, under the terms of which each of the four riparian states is to contribute the equivalent of \$25,000 in local currency, was signed on October 19. On October 22, the Canadian Government announced that all of Canada's principal air survey companies would be employed on the two-year aerial survey programme. Photographic Surveys Corporation of Toronto was at the same time appointed by the Canadian Government to act as management engineers for the survey. The 1600-mile stretch of the Mekong under survey extends from the Laotian border to the South China Sea. In length, the section of the river that will be covered by the Canadian survey is equivalent to the straight-line distance from Winnipeg to Halifax; in flow, the Mekong is approximately comparable to the St. Lawrence River.

In late October, some 20 Canadian surveyors and more than 200 Asians began six months of ground work to establish precise river levels and geodetic points along the survey route. During this preliminary ground-survey stage, which is to precede the aerial photographic survey, Canadian personnel will, for the most part, be working only in Laos and Thailand, between the Burman and Cambodian borders. One or two of the Canadian staff from the headquarters in Vientiane