

THE INDUS NEGOTIATIONS

The Bank's February proposal left the Pakistanis cold because it did not recognize their insistence that they be guaranteed the existing uses of water from the existing sources, along with previously planned uses. The visit of Zafrullah Khan in July was, in fact, not very helpful (although it was followed by his letter agreeing to a resumption of the cooperative work). For the Bank's part, the February proposal and the designation of a new Bank team indicated a new approach: the problem could not be solved solely by technicians; the Bank would, positively, have to negotiate according to a strategy or strategies of its own.

The ad hoc arrangement for kharif 1955, negotiated in April 1955 and signed some months later, was the first agreement of any kind that the two Governments had signed since partition. The mood expressed by Sommers, however, that the final agreement might emerge out of a progressive series of ad hoc agreements, was short-lived. By July, it had been superseded by Iliff's ideas about the attractiveness of an optimum plan to Pakistan.

The conversations conducted in London by Black and Iliff (March 1955) were conducted with Hume, the Secretary of Commonwealth Relations, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The New Zealanders were not consulted at this stage; they came along voluntarily, as a result of a chance meeting between the Prime Minister, Mr. Nash, and Mr. Iliff at a dinner in Washington, possibly in 1958 or 1959. The reception given to Iliff and Bengston in Ottawa in April 1956 was at first not favorable. The Finance Minister was quite cold to the idea of a Canadian contribution; but Mr. Pearson, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, had quite a different outlook, and it was his view that prevailed. (Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations)

Iliff's note of July 1956, putting the Bank's assistance for a long-range irrigation plan in Pakistan outside the cooperative work, was necessary to allay Indian fears about possibly greater costs to India.

Mueeneddin's reply of September 19, 1956, for the first time accepted the Bank's division of the waters.

Iliff's mediation was not only between India and Pakistan, but with Black as well, since he more and more wanted to abandon the whole exercise -- having believed in the beginning that agreement could be reached in a reasonably short time.

Mueeneddin was much more willing than his predecessors to make new recommendations to Karachi. But the problem on the Pakistan side was the weakness of the political situation at home.

The size of the Indian contribution finally was set by Iliff and B.K. Nehru with the help of a bottle of gin.