

The Canal Colonies Project and the British Government

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As compared to other provinces of the sub-continent the Punjab has been basically an agricultural province because of its vast fertile tracts of land and water resources. From its origin the socio-economic structure of this region is rural with all its benefits and pains. It has always provided man power and economic aid to the rulers of the sub-continent. It was due to this fact that every Indian sovereign has given great importance to this Province. Keeping in view its agrarian infra-structure, after annexation (1849) the British government paid full attention towards its agricultural development by introducing necessary reforms to increase the production. In this respect the most important measures were :

- i) The introduction of new revenue assessment system by which the assessment was made on the basis of average revenue of the previous 3 to 5 years testimony. It lowered the revenue rates from "5 to 50 per cent for different regions and 25 per cent for the whole of the state".¹ The decrease in revenue demand was made to encourage the cultivators to grow more.
- ii) The pattern of land ownership was adopted by the British Government. In India, before British occupation, the rulers assumed the position of a supreme landlord and the cultivation was a privilege rather than a right. The British government decided to develop the idea of private land ownership and collected the revenue directly from the proprietors of land. The cultivators were granted ownership rights if they proved that they had cultivated the land for a long period and they had improved the land by making investment in irrigation facilities, or they had been paying land revenue directly to the government for years. Under this new reformed system "nearly 650,000 occupancy tenants gained ownership over

1,850,000 acres of land".² The self-cultivating landowners and tenants with strong rights over the land composed the bulk of landholders, and they shaped the small land holding pattern in the Punjab. It gave incentive to a peasant to grow more and to improve the rate of production which led to economic progress and proved helpful in developing a welfare state.

- iii) The introduction of the Land Alienation Act, 1900, against the growing indebtedness of the peasantry and the consequent transfer of agricultural land by mortgage or sale to urban moneylenders, was a great challenge to the peasants who were the back-bone of provincial economy. This Act placed restrictions on the transfer of agricultural land with a view to check its alienation from the agricultural to non-agricultural classes.³ This Act was passed by the government merely to provide protection to the illiterate, poor and debt-ridden peasantry against their exploitation by the non-agrarian capitalists who had no professional interest in land.

After the annexation of the Punjab the initial task before the British government was to consolidate its power against any onslaught from within or outside. So the British rulers, first of all, paid their full attention to establish effective administrative structure for the maintenance of law and order in the province. As the annexation was achieved with the blessings of the feudal chiefs, consequently, the British rulers fully depended upon them. In return the government introduced several facilities such as better means of transportation, communication and modern irrigation system which went a long way in the overall development of the province. Actually, the British government wanted to utilize the water resources of *Punjab* for the irrigation of south-west areas through which flow the rivers — Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi. This region had an ideal physical structure for irrigation work. Specially the Chenab river is a splendend source of water-supply, commanding a perennial ingress of water from the snowy sources on the Himalayas. The *Bari Doab* and the *Rechna Doab* had very fertile soil. The rainfall was scanty, the cultivation was very precarious and more than half of the area was uninhabitable desert. The physical contours of the colony area were exceptionally favourable to canal irrigation.

At the close of the 19th century the south-west part of the Punjab was one large expanse of desert waste. The water level was more than a hundred feet below the surface of the soil,

while the rainfall was scanty and uncertain. This region included Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Mianwali, Shahpur, Lyallpur (now Faisalabad), Jhang and Montgomery (now Sahiwal). The inhabitants of this region were the indigenous nomads, who eked out a very precarious existence almost independent of any form of customary food. The districts of Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh and Mianwali were quite distinct from the rest of the Punjab due to their arid weather and typical social traditions. There were a large number of sand dunes comprising the Thal desert. The peculiarity of the inhabitant's character of this area was that they were less inclined to leave their homes. There is a famous proverb that the *Multanis* "travels no further than the Idgah".⁴ Except in the north of Mianwali, cultivation was impossible due to lack of water and people had to depend upon flood water in the absence of other water resources. Most of the area was barren and the rainfall being very low, cultivation was merely a gamble which frequently ended in loss. In these areas the canal irrigation was required because the annual rainfall was about 12 inches and most of the rain fell in the month of July and August. Although the land holdings were large, as about 40 per cent of the cultivated area was in the hands of those who owned over fifty acres"⁵ but due to scarcity of water, the peasants led a miserable life. The *Sardars* enjoyed a position of unchallenged authority and the cultivators were at their mercy. The moneylenders occupied a position of importance as landowner and moneyed class and were known as *Banias*. His relations with the debtors were cordial and he always avoided to rush to the law courts due to its ineffective and costly procedure. In early 20th century, except Multan Tehsil, the cultivators of other areas were heavily in debt, which was "at least thirty times the land revenue".⁶ In these districts the small landholders were at their worst. In Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan districts the standard of living was lower than anywhere else in the Punjab. But nothing could be done to alleviate their economic plight because half of the tract was burnt up by the sun, while the other half was exposed to the ravages of flood, which placed them under permanent indebtedness. The interest was continuously piled up due to non-payment and lack of adequate production causing immeasurable sufferings to them. Thus the tillers of the soil

were eking out a difficult and scanty living and were at the mercy of the landlords, *Pirs* and *Banias*.

The *Bar* (waste land) of Shahpur, Jhang and Montgomery was inhabited by pastoral races who often fought amongst themselves under their leaders and parcelled out its pastures. Their leader called *Rat* (a powerful man or dacoit) who enjoyed dominance over his dependants. He provided them protection and received in return a tax called *Pawanji*. The area between the Ravi and Satluj river is known as *Neli Bar* and the *Sandal Bar* lies between the Ravi and the Chenab river. The name *Sandal* has been derived from a notorious dacoit, Sandal, a chuhra by caste. This *Bar* was also known as "the *Tatar Bar*, or as '*Dulla-Bhatti-ki-Bar*'—*Dulla* having been also a noted dacoit leader who was one of the founder of the strong Bhatti Colony on the eastern fringe of the *Bar*".⁷ The *Sandal Bar* included the lower half of the alluvial plain of the Rechna Doab, and its northern boundary is defined roughly by the road running from Lahore to Shahpur via Sheikhpura, Khangah Dogran and Pindi Bhattian. Below this *Bar* was situated the whole tract of the *Doab*, including that part of the Sheikhpura District which once formed the Sharakpur Tehsil of the Lahore District and the low-lying belt of riverain land. In this area before 1860, there was no permanent habitation.⁸ Their hordes were called *Jan*, seldom stayed more than one or two months at one place. During the British rule their marauding activities were checked and the practice of grazing hordes was abandoned, and the establishment of quasi-permanent settlements was substituted. The *Bar* (waste land), though sparsely populated, was occupied by a variety of nomad tribes. They were mostly Muslims, and often Jats, though some of them were Rajputs. the nomad population of the *Bar* during the census of 1891 was recorded as 70, 000, and was generally known as *Janglis*. The aggregate area held by the nomads was about 70,811 acres in 1900 and 253,752 in 1903.⁹

The development of irrigation in any region depends upon the precarious of the rainfall and the scientific application of irrigation necessitates accurate observation thereof. In the Punjab, irrigation along the banks of the rivers had an ancient origin. At the annexation of the Punjab, the Inundation canals¹⁰ of the riverain tract were the most important source of irriga-

tion. The British government paid full attention to introduce a scientific system of irrigation by constructing canals to convert the barren land into fertile colonies. In this connection the first attempt was made in 1818, in Harriana and Bhattiana (Hissar) to establish a quasi-military colony along the frontier of British territories in imitation of Roman plan of empire building.¹¹ This endeavour to establish colony, however, proved to be a failure because the grantees being the natives of Rohilkhand and central India refused to settle in so distant and unsettled areas. With the annexation of the Punjab, the military frontiers were shifted to Peshawar so after restoring law and order in its new territories, the government decided to spread the waters of Punjab over the above mentioned arid deserts. The upper Bari Doab Canal (1859-1873) was constructed and the fertile and densely populated districts of Amritsar and Lahore were irrigated by it.

In 1862, government surveyed the Sialkot district with a view to ascertain the feasibility of provided irrigation from the Tawi river. The feasibility study was conducted to construct a perennial canal between Sialkot and Gujranwala from the Chenab river. In this respect two reports were compiled in 1863, and in 1864 respectively. The datas collected by the experts found to be "untrustworthy and the whole question of the irrigation of the *Rechna Doab* remained in abeyance until the autumn of 1872 when orders were issued for the preparation of a complete chart of level over the whole *Doab* with a view to elaborate a project for its irrigation".¹² In 1874, on the basis of this survey a project (including one permanent and two Inundation canals) was launched with the cost of 345 laks of rupees.¹³ But the government rejected it on the ground that the estimates were impracticable and the financial results were uncertain. In 1877, a modified scheme, known as the Chiniot Inundation project, was put forward. Ultimately in 1882, the government of India called for a rapid submission of new irrigation schemes which would be sufficiently classed as a productive public work.¹⁴ This experience paved the way for the colonization of the *Rechna Doab*. In response to these orders during 1886-88, the first irrigation project was put into operation in Multan and Montgomery districts. In this region one hundred and seventy-seven thousand acres of waste land was irrigated by the Sidhnai

Canal from Ravi, the lower Shoagpur Canal from Sutlej river and the Ramnagar Canal from the Chenab. This region was colonized by the immigrants from the central Punjab. Thus experiment proved a brilliant success.

The Chenab Canal project of 1882, had to facilitate the irrigation of the high plateau of the *Doab*. This scheme received the sanction of the Secretary of State on August 28, 1884, and the canal was opened for irrigation on July 9, 1887. But from its outset it proved to be a failure as it could never irrigated more than 52,000 acres because after floods the level of water used to decrease and there was no means of forcing water into the canal. Consequently, the process of colonization was stopped because the civil officers refused to continue the colonization of the Crown waste as long as the uncertainty of supply lasted. Therefore, in 1889, "a fresh project was prepared, which provided for a Weir across the river and considerable extension of the canal system".¹⁵ The new project was sanctioned in 1890¹⁶ with a view to distribute all the available water of the Chenab river over the whole area of the *Rechna Doab*. So the opening of the lower Chenab Canal in 1893, became the turning point in the economic history of the province. The project was revised by the further extension of the Middle Branch, or Rakh Branch. The two other branches — the Northern, afterwards known as the Jhang Branch, and the Southern known as the Gugera Branch were constructed by the orders of the Secretary of State in 1892.¹⁷ The total area colonized under this project was about ten million acres. This project estimated to cost Rs. 2,65,15,966 and the area irrigated was 3,823 square miles. It was "anticipated that the Canal would actually irrigate 528,500 acres in 1899-1900, 993,000 in 1909-10, and that it would reach a full development of 1,100,000 acres in 1914-15".¹⁸ Moreover, it was estimated that "the canal would give a return from direct and indirect revenue of 11.96 per cent in 1909-10 and of 15.64 per cent in 1914-15".¹⁹ By the end of 1918-19 the total capital invested was "Rs. 325 lakhs and the accumulated profits (after defraying interest charges) to Rs.1,519 lakhs, the average profit during the previous seven or eight years having been over 40 per cent on the capital outlay".²⁰

On the other side, for the welfare of cultivators different colonization Acts — The Government Tenants (Punjab) Act,

1893, the colonization of Government Lands (Punjab) Act, 1912, as amended upto 1920, were passed²¹ by the provincial government. It shows that the initiative for the construction of each scheme came from the government and the required engineering staff was employed for this purpose. The actual work of colonization started in February 1892 with the appointment of Edward D. Maclagan as colonization officer. The agriculture land in Khangah Dogran was allotted to all sort of grantees such as peasants yeomen, capitalists and auction purchasers. The early settlement hardships discouraged immigrants but later on the construction of the Wazirabad-Khanewal Railway made it convenient to the settlers. The Jhang Branch of the canal irrigated the north-western part of the *Rechna Doab*. In this area the land was first distributed in 1896. The major bulk of the work was completed by the end of 1898 as 390,066 acres had been allotted to the settlers and most of the usual hardships of colonists were largely removed. By 1899 the railways had reached in this area which prepared the way for the foundation of Gofra in 1899 and Toba Tek Singh in 1900. Now a days these towns are amongst the most flourishing business centres of the Punjab.

The Gugera Branch, including the Bhurala Branch, commanding the south-eastern part of the *Rechna* colony, was estimated to contain an allotable area of 700,000 acres. In this area during the period 1899-1902, about 709,570 acres were distributed among the settlers.²² Large number of soldiers, pensioned officers, capitalists and yeomen obtained allotments in this area. In 1900 the system of canal service grants was introduced on the Bhurala Branch and the tail of the Lower Gugera Branch. After the construction of Chichoki-Shorkot Road Railways, the market towns of the *Jaranwala* and *Tandlianwala* came into existence which later played an important role in the economic development of the Punjab. In above mentioned Branches till 1902, the area for allotment was almost completed. When in 1925, the area of the Pir Mahal Forest was transferred to the Lyallpur district, 5000 acres were disforested for colonization purposes and Pir Mahal Distributary was constructed in 1927. Later on in 1901, the Lower Jhelum Canal and in 1913, the Lower Bari Doab were constructed and the bulk of land was brought under cultivation. The upper Chenab Canal was

constructed in 1912, and the upper Jhelum Canal was completed in 1915. These two were principally the feeder canals transferring the Jhelum water to the Chenab river and the Chenab's water across the Ravi river.

TABLE NO. I
Table showing the particulars of Punjab
perennial canals

| Name of Canal | Date of opening | Capacity as first designed | Present maximum capacity | Present area commanded | Area irrigated during the year 1921-22 | Length in miles of distributary channels |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--|--|
| Western Jamna | 1873 | 6,178 | 6,430 | 2,324,407 | 855,368 | 1,880 |
| Upper Bari Doab | 1850 & 1873 | 5,000 | 6,700 | 1,504,050 | 1,343,471 | 1,560 |
| Sirhind | 1882 & 1884 | 6,000 | 8,541 | 3,667,221 | 1,233,619 | 3,424 |
| Sidhnai | 1886 | 1,820 | 1,820 | 278,088 | 200,409 | 251 |
| Lower Chenab | 1887-93 | 8,313 | 10,853 | 2,585,458 | 2,560,932 | 2,243 |
| Lower Jhelum | 1901 | 3,800 | 4,200 | 1,251,900 | 872,215 | 1,046 |
| Upper Chenab | 1912 | 11,742 | 4,871 11,929 | 1,510,672 | 655,421 | 1,252 |
| Lower Bari Doab | 1913 | 6,750 | 7,030 | 1,427,246 | 993,478 | 1,202 |
| Upper Jhelum | 1915 | 8,380 | 2,000 8,380 | 573,329 | 358,567 | 666 |

Source: W.P. Thompson, *Punjab Irrigation* (Lahore, 1925), p.5.

According to the colonization scheme, British government colonized the — Sidhnai colony, Sohag-para colony, Lower Chenab colony, Chunian colony, Lower Jhelum colony, Lower Bari Doab colony, upper Chenab colony and upper Jhelum colony. Among these colonies the scheme which was "adopted in the Chenab colony remains the prototype to be followed in all subsequent colonies with the necessary modifications of principle and of detail suggested by experience".²³ The Chief principles for the settlement of colonies were:

- i) To recognize the share of the native inhabitants in the colonization of the new land;
- ii) to call only the agricultural classes to settle;
- iii) to ensure that the immigrant settlers were men of good character;
- iv) to arrange that so far as possible a colony village should be composed of one body of men headed by their leader;
- v) to foster the growth of tidy villages and towns and to provide speedy means of communication.

In this respect the *Rechna Doab* scheme had great importance as being the model for the latter colony proposals in other parts of the Punjab.

The objects which the Government had in view in colonizing the vast heritage of waste land in the western Punjab were:

- i) The desirability of rewarding generously bodies of soldiers who had served the British rulers at the time of danger and readily available on emergency for military service.
- ii) To reward the feudal lords for their loyal services to the crown.
- iii) To relieve the pressure of population, where the agricultural population had already reached or was fast approaching the limit which the land available for agriculture could support.
- iv) To colonize the area in question with well-to-do yeomen of the best class who would constitute healthy agricultural communities of the best Punjab type.²⁴

- v) To open for the people of the Punjab an era of prosperity undreamed of in the past.

Anyhow, the whole scheme postulated great ingenuity, skill, patience and perseverance on the part of officials who under took the project. The following matters were of intricate nature which required the utmost care on the part of the British rulers:

- i) The disposal of the colony land;
- ii) its survey and its assessment;
- iii) the settlement of the immigrants;
- iv) the planning of villages, markets and towns;
- v) the provision of the means of communication and the general development of the colony.

To obtain healthy agricultural communities the bulk of the land was given to well-to-do agricultural peasants who would cultivate their own holdings with the assistance of their family members and of the usual menials, but as far as possible, without the aid of tenants. This class of peasants constituted three-quarters of the population of the colony.²⁵ They were generally Jat, Arain, Kamboh, Gujar, Rajput and Saini. Sooner it was found necessary, for the encouragement of peasantry, to settle there the cultivators with better means so that they would guide them by undertaking costly experiments relating to agriculture. This led to the fusion of the capitalist interest in the colonies. Due to the danger of the South African war it was proposed that the land should be given to those who would maintain mares and camels for breeding purposes. This object, predominantly in the Jhelum and Lower *Bari Doab* colonies, held quite a significant place in the distribution of land later on conditional grants were developed further and the land was given (i) for the growing of plantations, (2) for the breeding of special strains of cattle, (3) for the supply of milk or butter to the cantonments, (4) for the growth of selected seeds, (5) for experiments in fruit farming, (6) and for the introduction of steam plough. The distribution of land thus shows that colonies were not only organized to serve the primary needs or require-

ment of life but also to supply the necessary requirements to the army and to develop a high standard of agriculture.

The careful selection of colonists had great importance for the government. Though the government accepted those people who were struggling with an insufficiency of land in their native districts but the care was also taken to choose only those who could meet the initial expenses easily. It means that the settlers must be able to transport or to buy cattle, to house themselves, to break up the land, and, pending the first harvest, to feed themselves, their families, their menials and their cattle. Generally, the selection was confined to landowners, and occupancy tenants.²⁶ But it was necessary that they should be good agriculturists, and must be able to bear the expenses of bringing the land into cultivation. Under these conditions the main beneficiaries from the colonized land were the peasants proprietors who came from the districts where the population was already congested and the land was insufficient to provide subsistence to them. These colonists belonged to the eastern districts of the Punjab and they were hereditary cultivators.²⁷ Among them, the Jats were the most important community who occupied the major portion of the region for agricultural purposes and worked in various capacities as peasants, capitalists, yeomen and others. The Arains were also good agriculturists, who came mostly from the Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, and Jullundar districts. The Rajputs of the colonies who were mainly Muslims and most of them were pensioners, Yeomen, capitalists and purchasers. They were generally absentee landlords and did not take active interest in their holdings. The Ambala district contributed the largest number of Rajput immigrants. The Kambohs mostly came from the Amritsar and Jullundar districts. They were Muslims as well as Sikhs. They held land mainly as peasants, while some of them were the tenants of other grantees. They were good cultivators and famous for their love for arboriculture. The Sainis were a Hindu tribe who came from Hoshiarpur, Jullundar and Ambala districts and they were mostly peasants. The Gujars were mostly Muslims who held land mainly as peasants. They belonged to Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur districts.

TABLE NO. II
Numerical strength of the major agricultural tribes and land held by them in acres.

| Agricultural tribes | Numerical strength in 1901 | Land held in 1903-1904 in acres | Land held in 1913 in acres |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Jats | 150,602 | 234,432 | 303,135 |
| Arain | 70,246 | 191,794 | 201,162 |
| Rajputs | 40,129 | 35,288 | 61,867 |
| Kambohs | 15,238 | 55,665 | 56,731 |
| Sainis | - | 14,175 | 16,236 |
| Gujars | - | 20,350 | 22,015 |

Source: Deva Singh, *A History of the colonization in the Rechna Doab* (Lahore, 1929), pp.20-21.

The colonizers belonged to all ranks and positions, tribes and creeds from all over the Eastern Punjab. They represented the aristocracy, the middle class, and the members of agricultural tribes from the big landowners to the petty farmer, as well as the farm-labourer. There were also educated townsmen holding all shades of political opinions side by side with the stalwarts of martial races of the Punjab and the wily moneylenders, all pitched in close proximity to one another.²⁸

These colonies, in this manner, constituted within themselves a miniature Punjab, nevertheless they remained in close touch with the rest of the Punjab. In the beginning, the settlers faced grave socio-economic problems but the urge for a prosperous living and happiness led them to leave their homes and soil for a desolate place hundred of miles away to settle at a place hitherto altogether unknown. The colonies were divided into various chaks, each chak composed of a number of squares of land. In every block a fairly considerable portion of land was set aside for sale by public auction, by which the government.

earned a lot of money as a return from the vast capital expenditure. The land could be purchased by monied people belonging to all communities without distinction of cast, creed or occupation. According to Razi Wasti: "The radical lawyer, politician, the wealthy gentleman-at-large, the man who had enriched himself by means of commissariat and other government and private contracts, and in a minor proportion, some influential members of the agricultural classes — all invested their surplus funds, and in some cases even borrowed money for the purchase of these squares".²⁹ Nearly all the hereditary cultivator tribes of the province were represented in the colonies. It created the opportunity to bring the different communities in close touch with one another.³⁰ The camel and mare-breeding grants were given to the members of agricultural classes residing all over the Punjab. Therefore, the bulk of available land was appropriated to peasant settlers.³¹ There were totally seven categories of the settlers — the nomad peasants, the military peasant settlers, the small peasant proprietors, the yeoman grantees, the capitalist grantees,³² the auction purchasers and landlords. In this set-up the peasant proprietor was much more important due to his efficiency as he was the backbone of this system.

A new administrative set up developed everywhere in the colonized areas, which added to the prosperity of the people settled there. With the reclamation of fresh administrative changes some new tehsils were established. The Khangah Dogran³³ tehsil was formed in 1893, which included all the colony villages of the Gujranwala district. In June 1896, the Completion of colonizing work on the Rakh Branch and advance of the canal down the *Bar* led to the formation of a new tehsil out of the colonized villages in the Chiniot and Jhang tehsils with its headquarters at Lyallpur³⁴ (then in the Jhang district). The colonization officer's headquarters were transferred there from Shahkot.³⁵ In February 1899, a sub-divisional out post was constituted and placed in charge of an Assistant Commissioner,³⁶ and in May 1899, the whole of the *Sandal Bar* assessment circle of the Montgomery district, an area of about 605,586 acres, was transferred to the Jhang district,³⁷ necessitating the creation of two new tehsils — Samundri and Toba Tek Singh.³⁸ On December 1, 1904³⁹ a new district was formed named Lyallpur, comprising the tehsils of Lyallpur, Samundri and Toba Tek

Singh and the headquarters of the colony were transferred here from Shahkot. A little later Jaranwala was constituted as a separate tehsil of Lyallpur district, which had become the centre of development and progress. Sangla and Jhumra were also founded in 1896. The establishment of these three market towns, connected with railways, marks the conclusion of the active operations in the colony areas.

It was on account of this tremendous progress that by 1909, nearly all land available had been allotted, except the auction of isolated plots. The price of the land increased with the development of the colonies. In March 1892, the Punjab Government, with a view to ascertain the market value of land in the canal tract, sold by auction 8,783 acres of land on an average price of Rs. 43 per acre. In 1899 about 5212 acres were 'put up to the hammer' and fetched an average of about Rs. 134 per acre. The value steadily increased and in 1925 the auctioned price went up to Rs. 305, and in 1927 to Rs. 477, per acre.⁴⁰ The value of the town sites was higher from the very beginning. For instance in 1896 at Lyallpur Sixty-Six acres were sold in Rs. 1,87,860, on a rate of about Rs. 2,864 per acre. In 1899, sites sold at Gojra fetched an average of Rs. 5.991 per acre. In 1990 at Toba Tek Singh, the purchasers did not hesitate to pay Rs. 11,626 per acre. In 1920-21, the prices in the colony areas for town sites ranged between Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 70,000 per acre.⁴¹ Consequently, with the increase of wealth and prosperity the colonies came to be regarded as a suitable area from which government could draw both men and money at the time of need. According to Geoffrey Fitzhervey deMontmorency during the World War I the Lyallpur district's "total collections for various purposes of the war came upto Rs. 3,17,367 — In 1917 the total investments amounted to Rs. 35,36,112. When the second war loan was instituted in 1918, the colony again rose to the occasion and invested Rs. 31,82,269 in stock, Postal Bonds and Postal Certificates.

The success of the colonization scheme was seriously dependant upon the means of communication. So the government spread the net work of Railways all over the canal colonies. The first railways in the *Bar* was opened in 1896, from Wazirabad to Lyallpur. In 1899 it was extended to Toba Tek Singh, and linked with Khanewal in 1900. The construction of

the Sangla-Shahdara line began in 1905. Another railway line, which was built in 1906 connected the Jhelum colony with Karachi. Another line from Chichoki to Shorkot Road was planned in 1907 and was practically completed by the end of 1909, upto Jaranwala. The remaining portion of the same line beyond Jaranwala to Shorkot Road was completed in 1911.⁴² These railway lines offered a big stimulus to agriculture in the Southern parts of the colony area. It almost brought every part of the colony near the railway stations. No doubt the prosperity of the colonies may be largely attributed to the network of railways. The roads were also planned to connect the important grain markets with the interior of the colony. For example the work on the routes from Sangla to Shahkot, Chiniot Road to Panliani, Khanewal to Satiana and Lyallpur to Rodukom begun in 1903 and almost completed by 1905. The three other roads — Lyallpur to Narwala, Lyallpur to Miranwala and Gojra to the Lower Gugera Branch were also under construction. It was estimated that total mileage metalled was 145.75 in 1914. The social welfare programmes were also started by establishing schools in the colonies. The first school was built at Shahkot in 1896 and the same year five other schools were started, for which temporary accommodation was provided by the *lambardars*. But the progress was very slow and in ten years the *Rechna Doab* had only 46 primary schools and 27 indigenous schools. Gradually, the government solved this problem and in 1921, the main city of *Rechna Doab*, Lyallpur had an Agriculture College (1909), a Government Intermediate College and a large number of high schools.

The emergence of canal colonies project brought great prosperity in every sphere of life. At an early stage the "capital expenditures of over Rs.30,000,000"⁴³ were made with the hope that the additional land revenue acquired out of agricultural prosperity would increase the government income and improve the economic standard of the peasantry. It is true that the canal colonies project fulfilled the government aspirations, as up till "1907, the colony had proven a financial success. The capital outlay had been repaid, while the government received over Rs.700,000 annually as net profit from water charges and land revenue".⁴⁴ After a passage of time, the canal colonies area converted into one of the most fertile and prosperous regions and

played an important role in the economy of the province. The value of the land steadily increased due to a rapid increase in production and other facilities. It can be easily concluded that the canal colonies project certainly provided favourable conditions for agricultural production in the Punjab. The vast irrigation system and rail-road net work built under the British Umbrella; the well developed market for agricultural products; and the new technologies introduced during the canal colonies establishment, contributed a lot in the economic development of the Punjab. It is interesting to mention here that the prosperity of the canal colonies is even celebrated in the native ballads. For an instance a stanza from a Punjabi ballad is quoted below which gives some idea of the impression, made on the native mind by the progress in canal colonies.

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| اول سائیں سچے نوں ساراں | اک قصہ نواں اج جوڑاں |
| بار اگے کھادی چوراں | ہرن - گدڑ سہوھیاں گھوراں |
| سجا جنگل کوئی نہیں رہیا | ینگ صاحب دیا ملک وسا |

Translation: First I will praise the true Lord,
I will tell a new tale to-day.
How of old the *Bar* was the prey of thieves,
The shelter of deer, jackals and rats,
Now no barren jungle is left,
Young Sahib has peopled the land.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Selections from the Records of the Government of India, for the year 1849-1851, No. II (Calcutta), pp.27-28 (National Documentation Centre, hereafter NDC).
2. M.S. Randhawa, *Green Revolution: A case study* (Delhi, 1974), p.47.
3. Statement of Objects and Reason, *Gazette of India 1901*, part V, p.135.
4. Similarly "a settlement officer tells how a camel man, whom he wished to engage for a fortnight's tour, burst into tears at the thought of leaving his home for so long". Malcolm Darling, *The Punjab Peasants in prosperity and Debt* (Lahore, n.d.), p.94.
5. *Ibid.*, p.98.
6. *Ibid.*, p.102.
7. Deva Singh, *A History of the Colonization in Rechna Doab* (Lahore, 1929), pp.5-6.
8. *Ibid.*, p.22.
9. *Ibid.*, pp.23-25.
10. The oldest of the works is the Western Jumna Canal built by Feroze Shah in the 14th century to convey water to the Emperor's hunting lodge at Hissar. In 1568, this canal was renovated by the King Akbar, but it fell into disrepair in the early part of the 18 century. In 1873, the remodelling of the canal was undertaken and the western Jumna Canal at present had a modern irrigation work. The Hasli Canal was constructed in 1633, from the Ravi river by Ali Mardan Shah, the engineer of Emperor Shah Jahan. W.P. Thompson, *Punjab Irrigation*, (Lahore, 1925), pp.1-2.
11. Deva Singh, *op.cit.*, p.1.
12. *Ibid.*, p.11.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Government of India letter No. 87-A.J., May 22, 1882, (IOR).
15. Deva Singh, *op.cit.*, p.12.
16. Secretary of State's despatch, No. 2, P.W., January 9, 1890, (NDC).

17. The Lower Chenab Canal was opened as an Inundation Canal in 1887 and as a perennial Canal in 1893. This project differed from other similar schemes as it contemplated the irrigation of the high plateau of the *Doab* and not the irrigation of the low riverain lands to which the Inundation Canals are generally confined. It was designed to carry a maximum supply of 1800 cubic feet per second. With command over 881 square miles (of which 164 square miles were Government Waste), it was estimated that the canal would be able to irrigate 144,000 acres, or 25.4 per cent of the whole area. The estimated income was about Rs.2½ laks on the estimated total cost of nearly Rs.32 lakhs. Deva Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.11-12. Also see, W.P. Thompson, *op.cit.*, p.5.
18. Deva Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.12-13.
19. *Ibid.*, p.13.
20. *Ibid.*
21. J.G. Bfazley and F.H. Puckle, *The Punjab Colony Manual*, Vol. II, (Lahore, 1922), pp.1-15.
22. Deva Singh, *op.cit.*, p.14.
23. *Ibid.*, p.2.
24. *Ibid.*, p.3.
25. Muhammad Khurshid, 'The Role of the Unionist Party in the Punjab Politics: 1923-1936', unpublished Ph.D., Dissertation, Islamia University Bahawalpur, 1992, p.37.
26. The occupancy tenants were those who tilled the land for over twelve years in succession, granted 'occupancy tenants' status and their rent was fixed. Muhammad Khurshid, *op.cit.*, pp.19-21. For further details see, Xinru Liu, 'Small Land-holdings in the Punjab: The Historical Perspective', *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVI-11, October 1982, pp.391-395.
27. Letter No. 885, from the Senior Secretary to the Financial Commissioner (then Mr. Lyall), January 26, 1883, (IOR). According to this letter, in the eastern part of the Punjab and in the Sub-Himalayan tracts there, not infrequently, were found villages peopled by agriculturists of the best type, who had increased in number until the lands which they owned were insufficient for their support. (Amritsar, Jullunder, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Ludhiana, Classed supreme in the scheme).
28. Razi Wasti, 'The Punjab Colonization Act', *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. 1-ii, October 1967, p.393.

29. *Ibid.*, p.392.
30. *Ibid.*, p.393.
31. Letter No. 327, Government of the Punjab, July 22, 1891, (NDC).
32. The capitalist grantees were almost invariably absentees and as such they did not contribute materially to the social and economic development of the colony.
33. The Khangah Dogran Tehsil of Gujranwala district was transferred to the new district of Sheikhpura constituted in 1919. See for details, the Administration Report of 1919 (NDC).
34. *Punjab Gazette*, Notification No. 462, August 22, 1893.
35. *Punjab Gazette*, Notification No. 442, June 11, 1896.
36. *Punjab Gazette*, Notification No. 93, February 1, 1899.
37. *Punjab Gazette*, Notification No. 370, May 4, 1899.
38. *Punjab Gazette*, Notification No. 413 and 414, May 2, 1900.
39. *Punjab Gazette*, Notification No. 1313, November 15, 1904.
40. Deva Singh, *op.cit.*, p.61.
41. *Ibid.*, p.61.
42. *Ibid.*, pp.52-53.
43. N.G. Barrier, 'The Punjab Disturbances of 1907: The Response of the British Government in India to Agrarian Unrest', *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol. VIII-ii, October 1947, p.447.
44. *Ibid.*, pp.452-453.