

*A Progress Report*

# PLANNING FOR A BETTER PAKISTAN



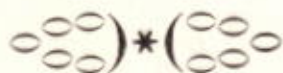
*A factual story of the achievements of Directorate  
Military Lands and Cantonments*



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## INTRODUCTION

The period under review saw many changes both in the Service administrative machinery as well as that of the State. The Revolutionary regime brought about many reforms. A number of Commissions were appointed whose recommendations had a great bearing on various aspects of national life. The Cantonment administration was consequently charged with the implementation of the reforms in the sectors directly related to it. Despite the handicaps of limited financial resources at its disposal, the PMLCS tried to make a headway in the different spheres.

With the creation of the institution of Basic Democracies, the foundations have been laid for the working of a stable system of democratic government. The system is working very well in Cantonments and the contribution of the service in making it a success is very significant. But on account of a general trend towards urbanization as the latest census figures show, the responsibilities of the Service have increased manifold. A typically rural country around the turn of the century, Pakistan, today, has emerged as a semi-industrialised country. This growth in the urban population has demanded more and more civic services. With the requirement of more houses, and provision of allied municipal services, there is a natural clamour for greater civic amenities. The Service is doing its best inspite of financial limitations. To make them conversant with the modern methods of local administration in U.S.A. and other progressive countries of Europe, circular letters were issued suggesting to the officers of the Service to read available literature pertaining to the subject. The officers need training and study-tours of foreign local institutions to widen their outlook, but of course, within the orbit of available national resources.

Before the introduction of Basic Democracies system, elections were held in 1958 to constitute the Cantonment Boards. Elections were smooth and impartial but rivalries among the candidates resulted in writ petitions which were successfully contested by the Cantonment Executive Officers and invariably all the petitions were rejected with costs. In some cases the elected members did not work in the true democratic spirit; far from serving public cause, they played in the hands of politicians. Having noticed

this in Lahore, the Martial Law Authorities were constrained to abolish the existing Board on 15th May 1959 and ordered that it should be modelled on the pattern of Section 14 of the Cantonments Act, 1924.

The Five-Year Development Plan has also enjoined upon the Pakistan Military Lands and Cantonments service, to ensure development at a faster pace in the relevant sectors of communal life. Education has been accorded a high priority in the Second Five Year Plan. Institutional facilities have been required to be expanded and emphasis has been laid on technical and vocational education. In this sector the Cantonment Boards showed phenomenal progress, inspite of heavy and unavoidable financial commitments. No other local authority has established and managed more educational institutions on a sound and stable basis. A large number of public schools, with technical, religious and moral bias, were opened with the avowed object of transforming the young generation into ideal citizens of Pakistan. These schools have compared wonderfully well with the Foreign Missionary institutions which monopolised the better type of education. Recommendations of National Education Commission have been sincerely implemented by the Cantonment Schools. With a humble beginning, in MES or evacuee buildings, the schools gained popularity in a short period and, as the finances of the Cantonment Boards improved, modern buildings with essential amenities were gradually provided.

The President of Pakistan has always shown a keen interest in the Cantonment Schools and the Service is indebted to him for sparing time to lay the foundation stones of Cantonment Public School Peshawar Cantonment, Public School, Chittagong Cantonment, Adamjee Public School, Dacca and Cantonment Dawood Public School, Jessore. While laying the foundation stone of Chittagong school on the 17th October 1961, the President stressed the need of establishing such educational institutions in the country where talented young men could develop their natural aptitude and equip themselves to shoulder the responsibilities of the country. He emphasised the need for having more and more trained and efficient teachers, and deprecated the idea of depending always on foreigners for imparting education. He added that good educational institutions run by trained personnel could play a great part in revolutionising the character of the nation.

Inspite of natural calamities like floods and typhoons which caused considerable damage to the property, the speed of overall progress was

maintained. But Sialkot, Jhelum and Dacca Cantonments were adversely affected.

Greater service with lesser taxation has been the aim of the Service. Till recently the property tax was imposed by a number of agencies in the Cantonment (Central Government, Provincial Government and Cantonment Boards) which needed review and rationalization. This factor retarded the building activity which was so vital to our national interests. To create an incentive for the prospective buildings by securing a fair return of the investment on this activity, President's Order 2 of 1959 was promulgated which excluded the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government from imposing the property tax in the Cantonments. The Provincial Government has also expressed the desire to rationalize the property tax. The Governor of West Pakistan in his Budget speech of 1959 disclosed that the total tax on Urban immovable properties imposed both by the Municipal Committee and the Taxation Department had been calculated at 32% and it was desired in the interest of owners to amalgamate the two taxes into a combined tax not exceeding 20%. The decision of the Provincial Government has not been implemented so far, but in Cantonments the house tax will not be allowed to exceed 15% in order to afford relief to the property owners.

With the increase of Cantonment population, the Boards deployed their means to provide additional quantity of pure and hygienic piped water and more shopping centres to ensure clean and protected food stuffs and other articles. New dispensaries came into existence and extension of building and equipment was made in hospitals.

All possible sources of income were tapped and income bearing projects were undertaken ; as a result the overall financial position of the Boards appreciably increased. Special mention may be made of Cantonment Boards Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi where the receipt figures shot up to Rs. 44 lakh, 21 lakh, 17½ lakh and 17 lakh as against the 1959 income of Rs. 30 lakh, 17 lakh, 13½ lakh and 6½ lakh respectively.

There was considerable addition to the Government Revenues in the Military Estates Sector. Agricultural and building leases and disposal of surplus and uneconomical properties including the war assets, brought greater receipts to the national Exchequer.

Besides, vigorous efforts were made to retain the reputed sanitation standard in Cantonments. A greater number of community latrines was



completed and fly-proofed. More urinals were built and a large number of modern rubbish bins mounted on concrete platforms. In Multan and Lahore, underground sewerage system replaced the surface drains.

Furthermore, open available sites in the Cantonments were developed into Housing colonies for the Officers of the Armed Forces as well as for the public. Master plans were prepared to cater for the various amenities of water supply, roads, sewerage, hospitals, schools, markets, etc. and for improving the general appearance of the Cantonments, modern lights, ornamental bushes and foot-paths were provided. Roads were widened and tree plantation for the formation of avenues was undertaken. Lahore, Multan and Kohat Boards held Flower Shows to develop flower taste among the Cantonment residents. Public and children parks were laid out for public recreation besides beautification of the area. Where funds and space permitted, fruit orchards were grown to supplement the income. The Service can rightly boast of developing the first National Park and the following extract from the speech of Field Marshal Muhammed Ayub Khan on the occasion of opening ceremony of Ayub National Park in Rawalpindi Cantonment contains an apt appreciation of the place of parks in our national life.

“In throwing this place open you are making a gift to the nation of its first National Park. It is a welcome addition to national architecture worthy of a people noted in history for great artistic creations. Gardens and landscape decorations have been essential parts of our national architecture. That gardens have a special fascination for the Muslim mind, is also evident from the excessive imagery drawn from flowers and the world of nature in our language and every day speech, let alone poetry and literature”.

Acquisition of land for Defence involved enormous amounts of money and a strain on the national exchequer. Tactful handling of the problem and technical advice tendered by the Service Officers resulted in economy to the tune of millions of rupees. Requisitioning of property for Armed Forces led to litigations in the Courts ; the Service successfully faced such situations.

The functions of Provincial Government Officers were smoothly carried out by the Service Officers in addition to their normal duties, and they earned appreciation from all quarters for their efficiency and integrity. The Officers worked as Rehabilitation Commissioners,

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