

crisis in the Prairie Provinces led to the inauguration by the Dominion Government of the rehabilitation program.

The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act was passed by the Parliament of Canada in 1935 to provide for the improvement of agricultural conditions in those parts of the Prairie Provinces which in recent years have suffered severely from drought and soil drifting. The principal object of the rehabilitation program inaugurated by this Act is to introduce measures in the affected areas to control these conditions and to establish agriculture on a sound economic basis. These measures include the improvement of cropping and cultural practices, the conservation of surface water supplies, and necessary adjustments in land utilization. Each of these is dealt with under the headings presented below. Active co-operation between the Government and the farmers, rather than the provision of relief, is an important feature of this program.

The Act is administered by the Dominion Minister of Agriculture, operating through the Dominion Experimental Farms and other branches of the Department of Agriculture. Co-operating agencies include the governments of the three Prairie Provinces and various services of the Dominion Government. Appropriations under the Act have amounted to \$1,250,000 for the fiscal year 1935-36, \$1,184,420 for 1936-37 and \$2,000,000 for 1937-38.

CULTURAL WORK.

Aside from the lack of precipitation which is beyond human control, and which greatly reduces crop yields, soil drifting is the most serious problem encountered in the Prairie Provinces during periods of drought. Fortunately, methods of controlling this menace are available, the success of which is enhanced by their widespread adoption throughout the affected area. For this reason a very considerable amount of the cultural work under the rehabilitation program is directed to the control of soil drifting.

Soil Drifting.—The prevalence of soil drifting during dry years in the Prairie Provinces is caused, in large measure, by the very extensive practice of summer-fallowing. Under the average climatic conditions which prevail in the southern parts of the Prairie Provinces, the amount of precipitation received is not sufficient to produce a profitable crop each year on the same land. This fact has led to the practice of summer-fallowing, whereby part of the land is kept bare of vegetation by cultivation during one year in order that any rainfall received may be stored to augment moisture supplies for crop production in the succeeding year. As this practice exposes a large proportion of the crop land in a pulverized condition to the erosive action of high winds, soil drifting is apt to occur on summer-fallow during dry years.

The attack on soil drifting under the rehabilitation program involves the introduction of improved methods of summer-fallowing. One of the most effective methods of soil-drifting control is strip farming, which consists of dividing large fields into alternate narrow strips of crop and summer-fallow. These strips, which may vary in width from 8 to 16 rods, are run at right angles to the direction of the prevailing strong winds. Drifting, which may start on the fallow strips, is prevented from spreading by the crop or stubble on the adjacent strips. In this manner the cumulative effect of drifting on large fields is avoided. Strip farming has been practised successfully for many years in parts of southern Alberta, and its use throughout the drought area is being widely adopted.