

New West, Magrath, Raymond, United, Little Bow and the Mountain View irrigation districts. The construction of these projects cost some \$6,800,000 and the total area irrigated from these works is 180,800 acres.

With the transfer of the natural resources in 1931 the administration of water rights, excepting international streams, became a provincial responsibility. The total expenditure on irrigation up to that time was estimated at \$50,000,000, including cost of construction, maintenance and operation, replacements and betterments. The total area of irrigable land at that time was nearly 608,000 acres including large projects in Alberta and small projects in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

The financing of irrigation development up to that time was based on the idea that the water users should and could pay the total cost of construction including interest on unpaid principal in addition to maintenance and operation. The benefits of irrigation had been demonstrated but the returns to the water users, particularly during the early development years, proved inadequate in most cases to meet the obligations water users then had to assume. Irrigation farmers were especially hard hit by the adverse economic conditions that followed the War of 1914-18 and some drastic reductions in capital charges were found necessary.

The rebuilding of the beet-sugar factory at Raymond, Alta., in 1925, and the introduction of phosphate fertilizers in the late 1920's marked the beginning of more intensive irrigation farming in that Province.

The drought of the 1930's increased the demand for irrigated land but there was little or no prospect of any new construction during the early depression years. The Canadian Pacific Railway initiated its policy of withdrawing from irrigation development by turning over its holdings at Brooks, Alta., to the water users and the Provinces were not in financial position to undertake any development work of this nature. As a result, irrigation expansion was at a complete standstill when the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act was passed by the Parliament of Canada in 1935.

This marked the beginning of a new phase in irrigation development on the prairies whereby the Dominion Government was to undertake construction of large irrigation works, to provide assistance for individual projects as well as to conduct surveys and prepare plans.

The P.F.R.A. is broad in scope and water development has, from the outset, been regarded as a major activity in the comprehensive rehabilitation program initiated under the Act. With funds made available from the Dominion Treasury the P.F.R.A. organization is undertaking, with the co-operation of the provinces concerned, to complete the job of irrigation development on the prairies.

Construction work was largely held up during the War, but considerable surveying and designing work was carried on and in 1946 construction was started on a huge irrigation system in southeastern Alberta known as the St. Mary-Milk Rivers Project. When completed this system will provide water for 345,000 acres of new irrigable land and, in addition, give a full supply of water for some 120,000 acres served by existing works. This project extends mainly along the railway line between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. The lands to be served, therefore, are located in the low-precipitation, high-temperature zone of the prairies in which a wide range of crops are successfully grown where irrigation is available to supply the normal moisture deficiency.

The Project will be the largest irrigation system on the Canadian prairies and the dam, for which the contract has been let, will be 185 feet high and half a mile long at its crest. This will be the highest earth dam so far undertaken in Canada. Construction will extend over a number of years and the total cost, which will exceed \$15,000,000, will be divided among the Dominion Government, the Province of Alberta