

## Section 3.—Agricultural Irrigation and Land Conservation

### Subsection 1.—Federal Projects\*

#### PRAIRIE FARM REHABILITATION ACT

The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act is a rehabilitation program conceived by Parliament in 1935 to meet the problems of drought and soil drifting adversely affecting agriculture on the Canadian prairies.

Existing agencies of the Government of Canada were assisted, with P.F.R.A. funds, to expand their activities in providing leadership in the immediate drought problems. In particular, cultural investigations were carried out by the Experimental Farms Service to insure the most economic use of the limited supply of soil moisture for crop production and the prevention of soil drifting farm lands that were a menace to surrounding good land. A program of water conservation to meet immediate needs was also initiated in 1935. Other services, such as the Economics Division, were assisted where special knowledge was required for rehabilitation measures.

An amendment to the Act in 1946 transferred the responsibility for cultural activities from P.F.R.A. to the Experimental Farms Service with headquarters at Ottawa.

The major activities of the P.F.R.A. administration, with headquarters at Regina, now include the construction, for the Government of Canada, of all projects concerned with water conservation and land utilization in the Prairie Provinces. In special cases where facilities for pre-investigational studies on important engineering problems are not available through existing government departments, P.F.R.A. provides its own facilities.

#### Water Conservation

**Small and Community Projects.**—P.F.R.A. provides engineering and financial assistance to farmers in the construction of water conservation works within drought areas of the three Prairie Provinces as a rehabilitation measure. The amount of financial assistance awarded is largely dependent upon the type and size of the project contemplated. At all times the P.F.R.A. policy, with respect to assistance provided, is to assist farmers to rehabilitate themselves. Authority to proceed with construction is first secured through the respective provincial water rights departments. Water conservation projects in this category are classified either as "individual farm projects" or as "community projects" undertaken by a group of farmers.

**Individual Farm Projects.**—During 15 years of operation P.F.R.A. has provided assistance to farmers to construct 43,042 individual farm projects in the form of dugouts and small dams, many of which are suitable for irrigation. The objective is to provide adequate water-storage facilities where water shortages exist, to assure dependable water supplies for domestic requirements, for stockwatering and for the production of live-stock feed through irrigation.

Of the 43,042 projects completed by Mar. 31, 1950, 36,130 have been designed as dugouts, 5,500 as stockwatering dams and the remaining 1,412 projects as small irrigation schemes. The construction of these projects has extended the benefits of water to all parts of the dry area. By so doing, a much larger number of farmers have been rehabilitated than would have been possible through the construction of

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