

Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act

Under the terms of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, an initial appropriation of \$4,750,000 was made to cover the cost of rehabilitation activities for a period of five years, and an Advisory Committee was established to give leadership to the program. Rather than establish new services, existing agricultural services were given assistance to expand their operations to handle the work, particularly the Experimental Farms Service. As the PFRA program developed, a separate administration was set up in Regina (in 1936) to direct water development, while the cultural improvement program continued under the direction of the Experimental Farms Service. Then, by amendment to the Act in 1937, the PFRA was extended to include land utilization and resettlement. It was realized, however, that for the development of a sound agricultural economy on the prairies, more long-term measures for rehabilitation would be necessary. In 1939 therefore, additional financial allocations were made and the five-year limitation to the PFRA was removed.

Water Development.—Projects constructed under the water development program and carried out under the supervision of the Water Development Division of the Agricultural Services Branch, are divided into two main categories according to size of project, number of people benefiting, and cost of construction: (1) individual and neighbour projects and (2) community projects.

Individual and neighbour projects are works serving the needs of one or two farmers. They are generally in the form of small dams and dug-outs that supply water for stock-watering and domestic use and/or for irrigation purposes. PFRA provides all engineering services required to plan and design such projects and a portion of the construction costs. The rate of assistance paid on individual projects is based on yardage of earth moved and amounts to seven cents per cubic yard up to a maximum of \$250 for dug-outs, \$300 for stockwatering dams and \$600 for irrigation projects. Where two or more farmers pool their water resources to build neighbour projects, assistance is paid up to a maximum of \$1,000. Responsibility for the actual construction is left to the farmer who either contracts the work out or builds the project himself.

Community projects utilize the waters of well-defined watersheds and are built to serve the needs of groups of farmers. Each project is justified on the basis of its individual merit and the major share of cost is borne by PFRA.

During the 25 years in which PFRA has been engaged in this work, the program has resulted in the construction of more than 65,000 individual and neighbour projects and about 800 community water storage and development schemes.

Major Projects.—While the immediate needs of farmers are being met by PFRA, attention has also been given in more recent years to the construction of larger irrigation and reclamation projects involving the development of many thousands of acres of land. Such undertakings are in line with the long-range land-use plan to provide for expansion and stability in Canada's growing economy. Of an estimated 3,000,000 acres of potentially irrigable land in Western Canada, 1,500,000 acres have been, or are in process of being developed. The intention is, when conditions warrant, to develop the remainder of this valuable resource.

The development of these large irrigation and reclamation works in Western Canada which, either because of their size or their location, have not been included under the regular PFRA appropriation, have been in recent years under the supervision of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration. They are undertaken by agreement between the Federal Government and the provincial government concerned, on a cost-sharing basis. Special authorization of Parliament is required for such construction.

St. Mary Project.—To make available for irrigation a larger percentage of the water flowing through southern Alberta in the Waterton, Belly, St. Mary and Milk Rivers, a program to extend the original St. Mary Irrigation Project was undertaken by an agreement between the Government of Canada and the Province of Alberta. The Federal