

Canada Water Conservation Assistance Act*

To help municipal and provincial governments with financing major water conservation and control projects the Canada Water Conservation Assistance Act was passed by Parliament in 1953. Under the Act, the Federal Government may enter into an agreement with any province providing up to 37½ p.c. of the cost of a major water conservation project that is considered to be beyond the normal financial means of the provincial and municipal governments involved.

During 1961, the Federal Government signed three agreements with the Government of Ontario providing federal financial participation in three major water conservation projects. In each project, the estimated cost was distributed among the federal and provincial governments and a conservation authority, the two governments each contributing 37½ p.c. of the cost and the conservation authority the remaining 25 p.c.

The first agreement under the Act was signed Jan. 28, 1961, providing federal assistance to a \$9,640,500 flood control and water conservation project in the Upper Thames River basin. The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, a grouping of 31 municipalities, will pay 25 p.c. of the cost of construction of five dams and three channel improvement works included in the project and will administer the completed project. Construction of the works will be spaced over a 10-year period.

Other agreements signed between Canada and Ontario provided for federal cost-sharing in the construction of the \$825,000 Parkhill Dams in the Ausable River watershed in western Ontario and the \$24,000,000 flood control and water conservation works that will be built along the Humber and Don Rivers in the Metropolitan Toronto area. The conservation authorities involved in these projects are, respectively, the Ausable River Conservation Authority and the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

To be eligible for federal assistance under the Canada Water Conservation Assistance Act, a project must meet three conditions. The works must be designed primarily for flood control or other beneficial uses. It must be major in character in relation to the financial capability of the province entering into the agreement. It also must be beneficial to a community as a whole. The Act requires that complementary conservation measures be carried out in addition to the primary flood control and water conservation works.

Prior to the passing of this legislation, the Federal Government provided 37½ p.c. of the cost of building the Shand and Luther Marsh Dams on the Grand River, the Conestogo Dam on the Conestogo River, and the Fanshawe Dam on the Thames River.

Subsection 2.—Provincial Projects

Saskatchewan.†—The Conservation and Development Branch of the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture was established in 1949 to administer water rights in the province and to carry on an active program in irrigation, drainage, flood control and land reclamation and development. Program emphasis has varied from year to year; drainage and flood control were of greatest importance during most of the 1950's but, because of the drier weather during the past three years, irrigation and community pasture development have taken precedence. The following is a summary of Branch activities to Mar. 31, 1960.

Water Rights.—In addition to administering the provisions of the Water Rights Act, further responsibilities were added to Branch responsibilities by the Ground Water Conservation Act which came into force on July 1, 1959. This Act requires every water-well driller to hold a licence and to provide certain drilling reports and formation samples. Licences were granted to 86 drillers, who submitted drilling reports on 496 operations. At Mar. 31, 1960, 5,962 Water Right licences were in good standing, involving storage of 455,598 acre-feet of water.

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† Revised by the Deputy Minister, Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture.