



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

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SMALL WATER DEVELOPMENTS IN CANADA AID U.S. WATERFOWL PROGRAM IN NORTH

The development of 8,494 small water areas in three southern Provinces of Canada, under a program sponsored by the Dominion Government with the passage of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act of 1935, is an important supplement to the national waterfowl refuge program in the North Central United States, it was pointed out today by officials of the Bureau of Biological Survey in a report to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

Biological Survey officials declared that though the Canadian Government's primary interest is to rehabilitate the drought and soil-drifting areas in the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, the same conditions are found on both sides of the border. Any water-restoration project in that region is beneficial to the waterfowl as well as to the agricultural lands, Survey officials said, and in both countries wildlife has received substantial incidental benefits from programs undertaken with other primary purposes.

The water-restoration projects were undertaken by the Dominion Government without financial aid from private organizations, domestic or foreign. Since April 1935, when the Canadian Parliament passed the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, appropriations have been made as follows: \$1,250,000 in the fiscal year 1935; \$1,184,420 in 1936; and \$2,000,000 in 1937. Amounts expended totaled \$411,500 in 1935, \$959,800 in 1936, and \$1,700,000 in 1937.

The Rehabilitation Act followed the intense drought of 1934 that destroyed millions of acres of farm lands and dried up the marshes and sloughs of the North Central States and the Prairie Provinces. The Act was passed at a time when the migratory waterfowl population of North America had dwindled to the lowest point in history, Biological Survey investigators having estimated the waterfowl numbers in January of 1935 at less than 30,000,000. In the past 5 years, the number of migratory waterfowl has doubled to a total somewhere around 65,000,000 in 1940.

The waterfowl refuge program in the United States and the Canadian government's water-restoration program have been credited with playing an important part in the recovery of the migratory birds.

By July 1939, the Dominion had completed a total of 5,538 dugouts, 2,388 stock-watering dams, and 568 irrigation projects. Individual farm owners cooperated with the Canadian authorities. More than 200 larger or municipal community projects had been completed, 148 in Saskatchewan, 50 in Alberta, and 6 in Manitoba.

"In some instances, at least, these restored water areas have immediately been resorted to by waterfowl," declared Hoyes Lloyd, superintendent of wildlife protection in Canada. "The value of these areas for water birds is increasing as time goes on and as food plants and cover become available." Biological Survey officials asserted that the entire Prairie Farm Rehabilitation program will incidentally benefit all forms of wildlife on both sides of the border.

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