

There was a call for an increase in the number of extension personnel whose job it would be to deal with conservation, as opposed to crop production. Two presentations were made to the Committee in different parts of the country, specifically on this topic. The witnesses expressed the same basic point - that the present rate of funding for training of agricultural personnel is insufficient to meet today's needs.

The Committee was told that Federal Government technical training programs, such as the Skills Growth Fund, ignore all aspects of agricultural studies, and do so to the country's detriment. If the Government committed greater funding in this area, trained technicians could undertake much of the needed survey work which would determine the extent and severity of soil degradation. These technicians could also work with farmers to develop the individual farm plans necessary to the implementation of conservation practices.

Many witnesses considered that the best way to ensure conservation in Canada would be to set up a system parallel to the American conservation districts system. These districts are formed within each state, but exchange information and expertise through a national association.

Manitoba and Ontario have a number of similar districts or authorities which work actively at the farm and watershed levels, serve as vehicles for funding and give farmers moral and technical support.

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service was cited as a model for a Canadian soil conservation body, taking into account the major jurisdictional differences between the federal systems of the two countries.

It was suggested that having such a vehicle to provide funding for the specific purpose of conservation would be a major step forward from the present state of conservation programming.

### **Dollars and Sense: The Economics of Soil Conservation**

*Because of economic considerations—namely, poor returns, volatile prices, rising input costs, and generally a lack of economic stability, farmers have not been able to practice what they know they should.*

**New Brunswick Federation of Agriculture.**