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G H. Burvill
Department of Agriculture

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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Basis of Co-operation with, and Assistance to Farmers and Landholders

By G. H. BURVILL, M.Ag.Sc., Commissioner of Soil Conservation

THE Soil Conservation Service has been established as provided in the Soil Conservation Act, 1945. To carry out its objectives will require the co-operation with it of individual farmers and landholders. The policy of the Service is therefore to encourage farmers to help themselves, and particularly to encourage them to recognise the need for soil conservation methods and for soil erosion control in the early stages. More particularly, the Service aims to provide, through its trained staff, technical assistance in the way of agricultural advice, research, conservation, planning, layouts and surveys. As indicated below, under the heading "Charges for Soil Conservation Work," all of the activities of the Service are provided free to landholders except for certain surveys and supervision.

Many soil erosion and soil conservation problems can be remedied by changes in farm practices. In other cases measures such as contour furrows and surveying, are needed to support changes in cropping and grazing methods. After the farmer and soil conservationist agree on a plan it becomes the obligation of the farmer to do, or arrange for, the necessary surveys and the construction work. Advice on suitable machines and methods will be given by Service officers. Of course, any soil conservation plan can only be fully effective if the farmer adheres to any agreed changes in his farming practices and also sees that all earth works, especially contour banks and waterways and other structures, are kept in good condition.

CHARGES FOR SOIL CONSERVATION WORK

As indicated above, advice with respect to soil erosion and soil conservation matters is provided free of charge, but the farmer must accept certain obligations with respect to surveys and construction work. As a clear basis for

distinction between free and chargeable services the following sets out the position.

(1) Advice—Free.

- (a) This will include general discussion of soil erosion and soil conservation with the farmer and inspection and discussion of his special problem to outline any necessary course of action.
- (b) It may include supervision or instruction of a farmer and his employees in the operation of any surveying equipment or plant which a farmer may wish to use in carrying out recommended practices, but shall not be extended to cover the whole of the work. If convenient, it may include a subsequent inspection of the work while in progress, or after completion.

(2) Surveying.

- (a) This work is chargeable where it involves the surveying of lines for contour pasture furrows, contour banks, diversion



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banks, etc., by a Soil Conservation Service officer or officers. If one officer is involved and the farmer supplies other help required the charge is £1 per hour. Where two officers are involved at the same time £1 10s. per hour.

(b) In assessing chargeable time—

- (i) Time travelling to and from the property shall not be included.
- (ii) Time on the property to carry out pre-arranged survey work shall commence from the time of arrival and continue while the survey is progressing, except for normal meal hours or unfavourable weather conditions.
- (iii) During the surveying, time spent waiting for the survey lines to be marked, or in collecting pegs and

shifting about the paddocks, shall be chargeable.

- (iv) Time spent in supervision of work for farmers beyond that defined above in (1) (b) shall be chargeable at the rate specified in (2) (a).
- (v) Time shall be calculated to the nearest half hour.
- (vi) There shall be a minimum charge equivalent to two hours work.

(3) **Experiments and Demonstrations and Farmers' Schools.**

In certain cases work may be undertaken by Service officers on private property, and may be regarded as for purposes of experiment or demonstration, or for the purpose of conducting a farmers' school in soil conservation practices. In such cases as may be mutually agreed between the landholder and the Commissioner of Soil Conservation, some or all of the work may be exempt from charges.

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