

handle much better, I do not know why we continue the old method.

General CASSIDY. Right, sir.

Senator RIBICOFF. Thank you very much, gentlemen. We do appreciate your coming here this morning.

Secretary Freeman, please.

We welcome you today, Mr. Secretary. It just goes to show how diverse the problems and the duties of a Secretary are.

Yesterday you were in front of the Finance Committee on trade, and here you are testifying today on the Department of Natural Resources. You certainly have to know how to be a switch hitter in this business.

Secretary FREEMAN. Nice to be here, Mr. Chairman, and to see you again.

Senator RIBICOFF. Why don't you proceed as you will?

Secretary FREEMAN. All right, sir.

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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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SOIL CONSERVATION IS CONNECTED TO PRIVATE LANDS

The Soil Conservation Service began as the Soil Erosion Service, an emergency program under the Public Works Administration. The Soil Erosion Service was established to conduct emergency demonstrations and to provide labor for the unemployed at a time when the very earth of the Great Plains was vanishing in devastating duststorms, destructive floods were washing away the heartland of America, and the Nation was gripped in the Great Depression.

It soon became apparent that this fledgling service was of such value it should be given permanent status and everyone, including then Secretary of Interior Harold Ickes, who administered it under PWA, recognized that it ought to be established within the Department of Agriculture. Why? Because it was a program associated with private lands and could not be separated from agriculture, all of which is in private ownership.

OTHER PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY AGRICULTURE

The Department has first Federal responsibility with respect to the water that falls on this nearly 81 percent of the Nation's land. We have extensive programs of controlling, conserving, and developing this water resource where it falls—in the forests and on the private lands in agricultural and other uses.