

The Conservation of Our Soil

BY

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Chief, Division of Agricultural Education
and Extension



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Foreword

We have here from the pen of Colonel Heinrich du Toit a contribution to our school books on a subject on which the author feels deeply and on which he is able, by virtue of his long and varied experience, to speak with authority, and as this brochure carries unmistakable evidence of the Colonel's humorous and attractive style any further recommendation from my pen is superfluous.

It is to be hoped that the brochure will occupy a place of honour in the libraries of all our schools, but more especially our country schools, and that teachers as well as advanced students will make liberal use of it in the treatment of nature studies and agriculture.

N. M. HOOGENHOUT,
Director.

Department of Education, Transvaal,
1st October, 1929.

Preface

1. The necessity of conserving the soil and the evils that result from its erosion, have already on several occasions been brought to the notice of the South African public by one writer or another, and in the Final Report of the "Drought Investigation Commission" the many sided evils of soil erosion have been specially emphasized.

2. One would therefore conclude that, for the time being, quite sufficient has been written on the subject, but the request of a large proportion of the public for more information on the matter has been so insistent that the writing of this booklet has practically been rendered obligatory. I am not sure whether very much more can be said on this most important subject than what has already been said in the Final Report of our "Drought Investigation Commission," but the fact that our farmers and a large number of our young people have come to realise for themselves the seriousness of the position encourages me to write at least *again* on the subject, in the secret hope that my poor effort at this stage of our agricultural history may assist in calling forth a more general and active campaign against this great national danger than has hitherto been the case.

3. From time to time I meet some of the uninitiated who ask: "But why all this fuss about a little soil that is washed down to the sea or blown away?" The world after all is full of soil and it is so common a thing that the Americans even call it "dirt".

Yes, that may be true to a certain extent, but if the people who talk in this strain had a little more knowledge of the subject they would have to acknowledge that there is a very good reason for all the fuss. Soil erosion is unquestionably one of the greatest evils threatening South Africa today, and one of the main reasons why it has come upon us like a thief in the night is that comparatively few people realise the seriousness of the position, probably through want of sufficient agricultural knowledge — a want that has sadly crippled our country in the past — and although agricultural education is coming more and more into its own in this country, erosion continues without let or hindrance.