

Mr. CULKIN. As a matter of fact, those waterways all have an ample number of buoys.

Captain RUDE. Yes, sir.

Mr. CULKIN. And they are lighted?

Captain RUDE. Yes, sir.

Mr. CULKIN. It is not any serious navigation task anywhere.

Captain RUDE. It would be like going along a lighted street most of the way. They do not require any expert navigators.

The CHAIRMAN. In the district below Norfolk there are two canals, one known as the Lake Drummond Canal running through the Dismal Swamp, and one through the Chesapeake and Albermarle Canal. Are they both in operation?

Captain RUDE. I understand the latter has a depth of 12 feet. In the other there are some sections about 8 feet that have not been maintained properly.

Mr. CULKIN. Those are ordinarily navigated at 9 or 10 feet, all of those waterways?

Captain RUDE. At any time.

As I said, from the Mississippi to about Port Arthur, Tex., two special charts have been prepared covering the Intracoastal Waterway and side areas in Louisiana and Mississippi on each side of the waterway. Those are charts Nos. 1050 and 1051. They cover a large part of the area on each side of the Intracoastal Waterway, and they were made primarily for the Intracoastal Waterway.

This morning the question came up as to the availability of barges, and also the question as to whether barges could be built in time to relieve the shortage of oil on the Atlantic coast. While I am not an oilman, it is my opinion that a wooden barge would hold oil which I understand is so sluggish that at times it has to be heated to put it through the pipe line.

There was a statement in some of the papers some time ago that the oil would leak through the barges and kill the fish along the canal. That seems to be a rather farfetched statement to me, that the heavy oil could get through planks about 2 inches thick.

Mr. SMITH. The fact is that the Maritime Commission has recently authorized the construction, or called for bids for the construction of tanker barges 185 feet long, which would be constructed out of fir lumber. Those would be practicable, would they not?

Captain RUDE. I do not know about the length, but I imagine there is no place which could not take that length. I do not know about the kind of wood these barges would be built of, but they could be built possibly of planking 2 inches thick and well calked, and when a plank is in the water it swells, making it absolutely watertight; and the oil, in my opinion, would not permeate to any great extent through the pores of the planking when it is that thick.

Mr. RANKIN. It would not be necessary to use fir timber; they could use pine, could they not?

Captain RUDE. Any kind of timber that would serve that purpose.

These barges are rather small, and they could be built in many places along these waterways with little or no interruption to the war effort, and of material which is not required to any large extent at this time, of lumber with a small amount of spikes and bolts.