

In the report submitted by the United States engineers recommending this 9-foot by 100-foot canal they submitted an estimate of the tonnage which would move through this canal once it was completed. It is a most fitting tribute to the conservatism of the United States engineers that before the expiration of 5 years after the canal was completed the tonnage passing through the canal at Harvey Locks and into the Mississippi River was four times as great as had been estimated by the engineers.

By 1940 it became apparent that the 9-foot by 100-foot canal could not safely and efficiently handle the traffic, and Congress directed that the Chief of Engineers submit a review report looking toward the widening and deepening of the canal from Corpus Christi to New Orleans. The report, when submitted, recommended the deepening to 12 feet and widening to 125 feet bottom width from Corpus Christi to New Orleans, notwithstanding the fact that the 9-foot by 100-foot canal from Galveston to Corpus Christi had not even been completed. The Congress approved the recommendation of the engineers and included the item in the river and harbor bill of 1940; you are aware of what happened to the bill.

The eastern terminus of the Texas-Louisiana section of the Intracoastal Canal is at Harvey, La. At Harvey, traffic eastward bound must take to the Mississippi River and proceed downstream about 6 miles, and there enter the St. Claude Street locks of the Intracoastal Canal, and through this canal for about 5 miles to Lake Ponchartrain, and then across the open waters of Lake Ponchartrain through the Rigolets to the Mississippi Sound and Mobile. From Mobile Bay the Intracoastal Canal is resumed, using partly dredged and partly natural waterways to Appalachee Bay.

It is not my intention to burden you with statistics as to the tonnage which flows through this Intracoastal Canal from Texas and Louisiana into Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida; these records are available to you and the tonnage moved is staggering when one considers the width and depth of the canal available. It is not necessary, I believe, to tell you that the greater portion of this vast tonnage consists of petroleum products, gasoline, and other fuel oils. I might mention that this traffic has increased by leaps and bounds during the past few years; in fact, it has been steadily following the development of the Intracoastal Canal eastward. That is, as rapidly as the canal is improved to the east, the tonnage follows, sometimes even crowding the dredges digging the canal, and this movement of petroleum products continues to increase. I might mention that during a recent period of 30 days alone the petroleum passing through the Industrial Canal at New Orleans amounted to over 150,000 tons. Just think what this tonnage would amount to if the barge canal across northern Florida now was available and we could take our barges on into the inland waterway at Jacksonville. The great resources of the refineries of Texas and Louisiana would immediately be safely available to the eastern seaboard; waste and destruction in the oil fields and hardships and privations along the eastern seaboard could be eliminated and tankers put where they belong—in overseas service.

I have emphasized the possibilities of the cheap movement of petroleum products because these are the products that most vitally effect the war effort, the one thing upon which all eyes are focused today, and should and will be for the duration. I could mention many