

Another Barge Canal Campaign

Representative Celler of New York will see President Truman about building the North Florida barge canal. This announcement is made from Palm Beach, home of John H. Perry, publisher of 26 newspapers in Florida and perennial promoter of the barge canal. (Drew Pearson used to issue pronouncements in favor of the canal from Palm Beach also.) Simultaneous Perry newspaper stories and front-page editorials accompany the start of another typical Perry campaign to "complete the missing link" in the intercoastal waterway system.

Recalling the campaign that won authorization for the canal during World War II, the emphasis is placed on the value of the canal for World War III. There is conflicting professional opinion about this argument, so there has to be a simulated public opinion—a supposed welling of grass roots wisdom demanding the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars for a project of dubious patriotism in peace or war. The Perry chain took out full newspaper advertisements in Washington during World War II urging Congress to build the canal, which quite naturally would pass near Ocala, home of the Ocala Star Banner, and Jacksonville, home of the Jacksonville Journal. Another campaign of this type plainly is in the offing.

However, Representative Celler need

not trouble himself to see President Truman. He can refer to the President's state of the union message for a yardstick on all deferred rivers and harbors project such as the North Florida barge canal. The President said: "In the months ahead, the government must give priority to activities that are urgent—like military procurement and atomic energy and power development. It must practice rigid economy in its non-defense activities. Many of the things we would normally do must be curtailed or postponed." In any case, if Congress did not regard the construction of the North Florida canal—which would duplicate the South Florida canal—of sufficiently high priority for construction in World War II, President Truman will have a ready answer from Congress' attitude for Representative Celler. That is a matter of record.

Attention, Congress

Ectoplasm being the useful commodity it is both to British history and the tourist trade, the house of commons read twice, in December, a bill to protect "genuine" mediums by repealing the Witchcraft Act of 1735.

How constructive if the 82nd Congress would please note and then do something to protect "happy" mediums—especially in politics-as-usual, discussions of foreign policy and abuse of the privilege of senatorial immunity!