

State Ships And Terminals

By E. F. GLENN, United States Army

It is settled that the existing Legislature will consider in extraordinary session the report of the State Ship and Waterway Commission. This is wise and good common sense for perfectly obvious reasons, among which we mention that they authorized and selected the commission to make a specific investigation and report to them. Incidentally this report makes very plain stated recommendations covering a most important and far-reaching internal improvement. No General Assembly has in the past, or will be called on in the future to consider a proposition that is of more universal application and benefit to all the people of the State. This fact is not so apparent to people in the Piedmont and mountain sections as is the highway system since they do not visualize the waterways to be developed as they do the improved roads that pass in front of their homes but the benefits exist if we develop and use those waterways. Moreover the development and use of those superb harbors and inland waterways bestowed upon us by Divine Providence is a sacred trust and obligation we owe to our posterity. As President Roosevelt said to the governors at the Conservation Conference in Washington, D. C.: "Any right thinking father earnestly desires and strives to leave to his son both an untarnished name and a reasonable equipment for the struggle of life. So this Nation as a whole should earnestly desire and strive to leave to the next generation the National honor unstained and the National resources unimpaired. Of these natural resources the soil, the forests and the waterways can not only be used in such manner as to leave them undiminished but can be actually improved by wise use." North Carolina has 200 miles of ocean front with an enormous expanse of navigable sounds, bays and rivers which afford greater opportunities for successful development of a system of waterways than any other state on the Atlantic Seaboard. The commission found that the use of these God-given waterways has been almost negligible and that as far as their usefulness in building a greater and richer and more powerful state is concerned it would have been almost as well for North Carolina to have been an inland state. What the State might have done and can still accomplish for itself and for posterity by the development and use of her unsurpassed waterways can be best determined by what other states have done and are still doing.

The fundamental purpose of all systems of inland transportation, whether by turnpike, railway, navigable rivers or inland waterways is to afford the cheapest and most efficient means of connecting with the seaboard in the transport of passengers and freight. Since waterway transport is always cheaper and generally much more rapid than any form of land transport such waterways should be developed and used whenever available and practical. Necessarily those states located on the sea enjoy very marked advantages over inland states. These advantages are wonderfully enhanced if they also have inland waterways and rivers susceptible of practical use in connection with the sea. Such is manifestly and pre-eminently North Carolina's situation as to transportation possibilities. We have failed to benefit by them as we should. Why?

This has been due to the economic system of the entire South. After the panic of 1819 the Southern states already committed to cotton, continued to expand this great crop utilizing their surplus savings to buy more slaves to raise more cotton. True Louisiana raised much sugar and other Southern states raised considerable tobacco, but it required a devastating Civil War to show the South that however important cotton may have been and still is yet it is not king. This war also demonstrated the uneven development of the South resulting from this one crop system to the neglect of other equally if not more important industries. Unfortunately this Civil War left the people of the Southern states so poor that until recently they have been unable to undertake a well-balanced development.

We can understand this better by a glimpse into the past. In the early part of last century and for ten years after railroads were known to be practicable the whole trend was towards constructing canals. Three large systems were developed (1) to transport Pennsylvania anthracite coal to the seaboard, (2) to connect the seaboard with the Ohio valley and Great Lakes region and (3) to connect these Great Lakes with the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Of course there were many other canal constructed as tributaries to these or to serve local interest. Of these systems the most far-reaching in its effects was the Erie Canal connecting New York City via the Hudson River with Buffalo, New York. Begun in 1817 and completed in 1825, it was but four feet deep, 28 feet wide at the bottom, 40 feet at the top and 362 miles long—in reality but a long big ditch—it was by far the most important artificial transportation route in the United States. It forced Pennsylvania and Maryland to construct similar highways to enable Philadelphia and Baltimore to compete in Western traffic. It opened up the entire Middle West and the Great Lakes region. It developed efficient transportation on these Great Lakes. It unified New York state and built up the port of New York until it has become the largest port in the world in both volume and value of trade. It stabilized freight rates from its completion to date. Before its completion it cost \$100 and required 20 days to transport a ton of freight from New York to Buffalo, after completion it

cost \$10 a ton and eight days for the same service. The third system of canals enabled the farmers of the West to float their surplus products to the South where they found a ready market for their flour, live stock and provisions. For their manufactured and improved goods the South went to the merchants of the North and East. Having failed to develop manufacturing, banking, commerce and shipping, the South paid tribute to the farmers of the West, to the merchants, manufacturers, bankers, processors and shippers of the East. This tribute will continue until we have a real and complete vision of our wonderful assets and actually develop and use them.

The situation today is that our grain farmers of the West are dissatisfied. They cannot produce grain as cheaply as in the Canadian Northwest nor can they transport it for export as cheaply. This because it cannot get through the congested ports of this country. To remedy this condition and prevent this going through Canada and the St. Lawrence, New York state has spent hundreds of millions of dollars in converting the Erie into a barge canal capable of carrying self-propelled barges through it and to the head of Lake Superior for grain and other products to pass through her port. All ports are funnels which add largely to the cost of transporting goods and especially when congested as our north Atlantic ports very frequently are. The result is that in combination with New Jersey, New York is now spending \$150,000,000 to expand these port facilities. The same thing is taking place at all of the other North Atlantic ports. In spite of this, however, Montreal and the St. Lawrence River route is successfully competing in this great western traffic.

In the South Atlantic and Gulf ports similar conditions exist. New Orleans has so expanded her port facilities that her export trade is second to New York's and more than three times as great as Philadelphia's. In addition she has improved her inland waterways and has maintained navigation on the Ohio, Mississippi and Warrior rivers in spite of the traffic opposition of the railroads and other opposing interests.

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Houston, Galveston, Mobile, Tampa on the Gulf and Savannah, Jacksonville and Charleston on the South Atlantic are spending millions of dollars in port expansion and business in every case is responding in satisfactory measure to the increased facilities at the ports.

In the past 15 to 20 years North Carolina has established a splendid school system. She has established manufacturing on a firm foundation capable of future expansion. She has improved agriculture until she is near the top and still advancing. She has done remarkably well in inland highway system. But she has done little for her trade and commerce which is suffering from an unfair and unjust freight rate discrimination. This she has borne for many years at a cost of ten to fifteen million dollars annually. The way and the only way to establish and safeguard our trade and commerce against this discrimination is to

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build up a co-ordinated system of land and water transportation connecting with shipping on the high seas from our own ports, equipped with modern terminal facilities. The ship and waterway commission report that this is feasible and will be effective; that the State should undertake it at once; that this conforms to modern practice at home and abroad; that a permanent Commission be appointed to act for the State in making these improvements, and in these recommendations these experienced business experts

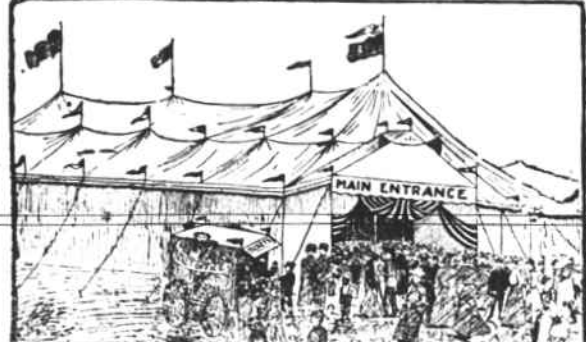
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