Wasted Texas Port Facilities Hurting War Effort, U.S. Told

Evans Mildly Optimistic After
State Group Sees Shipping Officials

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 28.—Texas ports vital to the war effort are being stripped of skilled man-power and their facilities wasted by arbitrary orders diverting shipping to submarine-infested waters of the Atlantic coast. A large delegation headed by Joseph W. Evans of Houston told high government officials here Wednesday.

Supported by Texas congressmen, representatives of Texas ports, civic agencies and the state government, the delegation pleaded for utilization of Texas port facilities to repair Admial Emory S. Land, chairman of the maritime commission and War Shipping Administrator Joseph S. Eastman, chairman of the O. D. I. and high officers of the navy, "Mildly Optimistic"

At the end of a day filled with important conferences, Mr. Evans was "mildly optimistic" about the outcome of his mission.

"We were given no promises, but everywhere we received cordial, sympathetic hearings and we have reason to believe that a situation under which Texas ports and their magnificent facilities are neglected will be remedied."

Members of the Texas party, in addition to Mr. Evans, are J. Russey, chairman of Houston's port; George Sealy, president of the Galveston wharves; Railroad Commissioner Ernest O. Thompson, represented in conference by Lamar Fleming, Houston cotton man; T. H. Kempner, representing the Galveston chamber of commerce; Walter Woodul of Sugar Land Industries; F. W. Parker, general manager, Galveston wharves; H. J. Luhn, Houston Compress company; Mayor Leslie Lowery of Beaumont, and Roy Miller of Corpus Christi.

Texas Solons Help

They presented their case with the backing of the entire Texas delegation, which was represented at the conferences by Senator Tom Connally, Representative J. J. Mansfield, chairman of the house rivers and harbors committee; Representative Luther Johnson, Representative Albert Thomas and Representative Wright Patman, chairman of the Texas house delegation.

In support of their argument that Texas ports are needed in the war effort and failure to use them results in "tremendous waste" of locomotives, cars, miles and port facilities, the delegation presented these facts to Admiral Land:

Under present policies, 100,000 tons of gasoline and other liquid cargo has been lifted from docks of Texas ports, transported by rail to distant Eastern ports, while ships were sailed from the Texas ports in ballast to pick up the cargoes. Cotton Sent East

Texas ports handled 68,000 bales of cotton were shipped by rail to Eastern ports and then placed on ships for movement to foreign ports. Rice, formerly shipped from Texas ports, is now moved through Texas ports for export, now largely moves by rail, but high rates have destroyed many markets.

In Houston alone, 24 Liberty ships have been launched. Of 20 commissioned, only two have been loaded on their first voyages in Texas ports. The others have been sailed under ballast to other ports. In some cases they have then picked up cargo transported by rail from Texas ports.

Gross Waste, Wait Says

"These 'summoning procedures,'" Port Director Wait told Admial Land, result in "gross waste of port facilities which will be badly needed before this war is over."

He said skilled labor is being siphoned away from the Texas ports and facilities allowed to lie idle.

"This is contrary to what the government has been trying to do," he said. "We are supposed to build six enormous terminals which were allowed to deteriorate after the war. These have now been requisitioned out of storage and our facilities are to be brought into use."

Wait explained that Texas ports contain a "vital part of the shipping facilities which are needed to win this war."

Recalls Last War

During World War I, he recalled, a severe shortage of port facilities developed in Texas, resulting in the need to construct six enormous terminals which were allowed to deteriorate after the war. These have now been requisitioned out of storage and the use of our facilities is inevitable, Wait argued.

During the past 25 years, he said, Texas ports have been largely left out of the expansion of war industries. Most of the small expansion during that period has been in Texas. Wait pointed out that Eastern ports have handled almost all of the shipping which has been left out of the war shipping picture.

The delegation presented strong evidence of the availability of Texas ports and the desirability from the viewpoint of expediting the war effort, of using them.

They made these points:

Climate Good, Ports Safe

The Texas ports are on the safest stretch of seacoast in the Western Hemisphere.

They are more secure from all types of attack—by submarines, aircraft or surface vessels. Texas ports are far distant from the viewpoint of the hinterland behind them, where vast quantities of war materials must be stored to assure prompt loading and unloading of ships.

They are under government control from the viewpoint of the hinterland behind them, where vast quantities of war materials must be stored to assure prompt loading and unloading of ships.

Over a period of three or four years, labor relations have been developed which would be highly useful to the war effort.

To Meet Somervell

The delegation presented to Admial Land a proposal from Rolland Bradley, attorney for Houston's longshoremen's unions, pledging the full support of labor in the effort to bring war commerce back to Texas ports.

In addition to Admiral Land, the delegation met with Capt. E. J. Carling, assistant chief of staff, Capt. E. J. Carling, assistant chief of staff, and Gen. Frank Snyder, assistant chief of staff, and Capt. E. J. Carling, assistant chief of staff, and Gen. Frank Snyder, assistant chief of staff.

Admial Land warmly thanked the delegation for "bringing these matters to the attention of the people of Texas."

The conferences will continue Thursday. Highlight of the day will be a meeting with Gen. Brehead B. Somervell, chief of the services of supply.