

RIVER AND HARBOR APPROPRIATION BILL.

JANUARY 19, 1920.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. KENNEDY of Iowa, from the Committee on Rivers and Harbors, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 11892.]

The Committee on Rivers and Harbors, having had under consideration the bill (H. R. 11892) making appropriations for the construction, repair, and preservation of certain public works on rivers and harbors, and for other purposes, respectfully reports the same with the recommendation that the bill do pass.

Your committee, in the formulation of this bill, took under consideration the estimates submitted by the War Department of appropriations required for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1921, and all bills, resolutions, and other documents referred to it during this Congress, as well as reports which have been pending from previous Congresses.

Section 1 of the bill makes appropriation of \$12,000,000—\$5,000,000 for the maintenance and preservation of public works on rivers and harbors, and \$7,000,000 for continuing the prosecution of improvement works on rivers and harbors which have heretofore been adopted by Congress.

It is estimated by the Office of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, that the sum of \$5,000,000, in addition to the funds available from previous appropriations made for that purpose, will be sufficient to maintain the existing river and harbor works in such manner as to adequately provide for the needs of commerce until March 4, 1921, by which time it is anticipated another bill making appropriations for the maintenance and improvement of river and harbor works will have become a law.

After carefully investigating each uncompleted project for which an estimate for further improvement is submitted and taking into consideration the existing condition of the channels, the size of the vessels to be accommodated, the amount of the funds remaining available on November 1, 1919, from appropriations heretofore made,

the rate at which expenditures on the several projects have been made in the past, and the desirability of continuing in force the organizations built up by the Government and continuing the operation of Government plant, your committee has come to the conclusion that the funds on hand, plus the lump sum appropriation of \$7,000,000 made in this bill, will be ample to prosecute these works without deterring the progress toward their completion and without interfering with the needs of the present and prospective commerce. The balances of funds on hand to the credit of river and harbor works from appropriations heretofore made are much greater at the present time than in former years. This is due to the fact that during the time the war was being prosecuted difficulty was experienced by the War Department in securing bids on contract work, the contractors being engaged almost to their full capacity on war projects, also to the fact that a very considerable portion of the plant owned by the Government was diverted to war work. Delays were also occasioned by the shortage of labor and the difficulty in securing materials.

In making a lump-sum appropriation for maintenance your committee decided to adopt this policy as an experiment. It has been the policy of Congress in the past to make lump-sum appropriations for maintenance work on groups of projects, but confining each appropriation to groups located in a single engineering district. It has been found that the engineers in submitting estimates for individual items have taken into account damages that are likely to be caused by severe storms, floods, and other unforeseen causes. As the result idle funds lie to the credit of projects to which appropriations have been allotted for considerable periods of time. On the other hand, it has frequently happened that important works are injured and channels shoaled by severe storms and floods, and the funds available to the credit of those works at the time are insufficient to restore them to their former condition. Illustrative of this is the damage done to Port Aransas and vicinity by the hurricane which visited Texas last September, which the engineers estimated will cost \$600,000 to repair. In a condition of this kind it is necessary to wait on action by Congress to supply funds for the necessary maintenance and repair work, and in the meantime the navigation of the ports so damaged is seriously impeded. The total of the balances remaining on hand November 1, 1919, to the credit of the different projects for maintenance work is about \$12,000,000. The average annual expenditures for maintenance during the past two years have been about \$7,000,000. The plan adopted in this bill will allow the Secretary of War to allot funds to the different works when and as the maintenance work is needed, and it is expected that the annual amount appropriated under this plan in the future will be considerably below former appropriations in amount and that a sufficient unallotted fund will be available from this appropriation at all times to prosecute emergency work at any locality when it becomes necessary.

Section 2 of the bill provides for examinations, surveys, and contingencies, for which an appropriation of \$400,000 is made. The greater part of this fund is expended primarily for examinations and surveys, though the expenses of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, the salaries of a part of the force in the Office of the Chief of Engineers (under authority of a provision in the

legislative, executive, and judicial appropriation act), and certain contingent expenses for which there are no funds available, such as examinations about bridges, bridge hearings, and other matters, are paid by allotments made from this fund. It will be noted that the number of examinations and surveys inserted in the bill is smaller than the average carried in past river and harbor bills. Of the items carried in this bill the majority provide for investigations with a view to the extension of navigation facilities heretofore provided by the Government.

In connection with the examinations and surveys ordered in recent river and harbor acts, the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, in its last annual report, makes the following statement:

From its investigations during the year the board finds that the general interest in the improvement of rivers and harbors has continued, resulting in occasional offers of cooperation by local interests. This cooperation has taken a number of forms, including donations of rights of way, cash contributions, and in some instances the provision of terminal facilities. The last named is not infrequently made a condition in order that the full benefit of the improvement may be realized. This is in line with the views expressed by the Committee on Rivers and Harbors of the House of Representatives in Committee Document No. 4, Sixty-fifth Congress, first session, and with the policy adopted by Congress in river and harbor act approved March 2, 1919. There are many cases where, in addition to the general public benefits to be derived from improvements, local interests will obtain substantial direct benefits from the proposed work, and in such cases the board has felt that the interests immediately benefited should share directly in the expense involved. Its recommendations in cases of this kind have been instrumental in effecting large savings to the General Government and in bringing about the development of needed terminal facilities.

Section 3 of the bill repeals the paragraph in section 3 of the river and harbor act approved March 2, 1919, which provided that no work should be undertaken upon any new project adopted in that act unless the Secretary of War shall be of the opinion that, based upon the cost at the time of entering upon the work, the project can be completed at a cost not greater than 40 per cent in excess of the cost as originally estimated in the project report. Eighty new projects were adopted in the act above referred to. It has been ascertained that on only 17 of these projects is the prosecution of the new work affected; that on some of these only a small portion of the work is affected; that on one project (waterway from Delaware River to Chesapeake Bay) it is doubtful if the work will be affected by this provision. Most of the works included in this list are small, but accommodate important commerce. The list is as follows:

Beverly Harbor, Mass.	Pagan River, Va.
Point Judith Harbor of Refuge, R. I. (a modification).	Scuppernong River, N. C.
Norwalk Harbor, Conn.	Brunswick Harbor, Ga.
Stamford Harbor, Conn.	Fairport Harbor, Ohio.
Newtown Creek, N. Y.	Ashtabula Harbor, Ohio.
Newark Bay, N. J.	Yaquina Bay and Harbor, Oreg.
Raccoon Creek, N. J.	Anacostia Harbor, Wash.
Chester River, Pa.	
North Fork of Tred Avon River, Md.	
Inland waterway from Delaware River to Chesapeake Bay.	

Section 4 authorizes the Secretary of War in requiring compliance with the conditions precedent to the prosecution of the project adopted in the river and harbor act approved March 2, 1919, for the further improvement of Yaquina Bay and Harbor, Oreg., to credit

the local interests with work which they had prosecuted on the project. The report on this project, which was transmitted to Congress on May 1, 1917, recommended an improvement, the cost of which was estimated to be \$836,000, but provided that before work is undertaken by the United States, local interests shall contribute the sum of \$418,000 toward the cost of the improvement. Prior to the adoption of the project by Congress the local interests, under a permit from the Secretary of War, proceeded to prosecute the project with its funds, the work being done under the supervision of the United States district engineer. In the preparation of the act of 1919, through an oversight, provision was not made for crediting local interests with the value of the work they had performed.

Section 5 provides that the unexpended balance of appropriations heretofore made for improving the inner harbor at Milwaukee be made available, in the discretion of the Secretary of War, for maintenance of improvement of the outer harbor. Milwaukee Harbor is composed of an outer and an inner harbor. The effect of the provision will be to allow funds heretofore specifically appropriated for the inner harbor to be used for maintenance work on either harbor.

Sections 6 and 7 provide for consolidating two contiguous sections of the Delaware River, which have heretofore been appropriated for and reported on separately, into one project. It also takes similar action with regard to two contiguous sections of the St. Johns River, Fla.

