

**STATEMENT OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, 2nd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND,
ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS
IN THE NEW ENGLAND AREA AND IN PENNSYLVANIA. JANUARY 2, 1956.**

I have a very serious problem to discuss today, one of vital concern not only to my constituency in Rhode Island and the people in New England but to all of the people in the Nation. That is the problem of what we are going to do to prevent the tremendous losses occasioned by future floods.

It is an imminent problem because it happened twice last year in New England, in August and October and in December on the West Coast. New England officials most vitally concerned are afraid of what might happen this spring if heavy snowfalls thaw on top of swollen streams and create serious flooding.

This is why it is essential that action be taken now.

The Army Engineers are asking for about \$3,000,000 in a supplemental appropriation, to be expended by June 30 of this year in advance planning for much needed flood control protection vital to the Northeast section of the country and for beginning construction of a few of the most important projects in this area. They are asking only for money they can spend in this important undertaking prior to the end of the current fiscal year.

Let me tell you something of the magnitude of the work of the Army Engineers which, in this country and New England, is traceable back to the Revolutionary days when General George Washington designated Colonel Richard Gridley of Canton as the first Chief of Engineers to construct fortifications for the defense of Bunker Hill in Massachusetts.

The accomplishments of the Corps of Army Engineers in a series of disasters which have struck the New England area in past and present years, comprises a brilliant chapter in the annals of the Corps. Going back to 1936 the New England Division of Army Engineers has been disaster conscious - perhaps more than any similar Army Engineer Division - because disasters have visited the area so often and with so much devastation.

The need for Civil Works projects to protect vital areas is well known to New England personnel of the Army Engineers not only because of the relief measures they have undertaken during times of disasters, but because of the extensive amount of study and work which has been expended in trying to devise ways and means of curbing Mother Nature's tantrums.

Floods, tidal waves and hurricanes have a habit of repeating themselves in New England and no group is more familiar with the dangers that they bring than the Army Engineers. As flood waters raged through inland communities bordering on usually placid streams turned savage by torrential rains, the Army Engineers were on the scene to assist in relief work to the greatest extent possible but also with a weather eye cocked for reasons why these things can happen. Even as one Army Engineer is directing the rebuilding of a vital bridge washed away by flood waters, another may be standing by doing hydrology studies as to why the bridge was washed away.

Studies made by the Army Engineers throughout New England's river basins, along its coastline and in its navigable waters have become monumental in scope and practical in application if the projects which these studies have proposed could be constructed. But construction requires money and money is

something New England has not been getting in its rightful proportion with other sections of the country. For instance, during the past 10 years Army Engineers have carried out flood control surveys in New England and submitted these surveys to Congress that brought about authorization for the construction of \$300,000,000 worth of flood control work. Only \$60,000,000 worth - one fifth - has been constructed.

Forty projects for navigation and beach erosion control were submitted calling for a projected expenditure of \$25,000,000. When navigation and beach erosion work is completed in the present fiscal year, only \$4 million of the \$25 million will be expended. At this rate navigation and beach erosion work already authorized will take years to do without any thought of future work.

Because of the storms of 1954 and 1955 Congress has authorized hurricane surveys along the eastern and southern coasts with particular emphasis on the Narragansett Bay and Providence, Rhode Island areas. The Army Engineers feel that they will be able to work out an economically feasible plan of protection which may be submitted to Congress by October, 1956. This will be new work that will demand the expenditure of considerable money.

As the Army Engineers continue their herculean task of relief and repair in disaster areas in New England - task that will require the expenditure of more than \$20 million dollars - these same areas are constantly facing a repeat performance unless money is forthcoming for work formerly proposed and authorized but not constructed. Along the Blackstone River, which rises in Massachusetts and which flows through the important cities of Worcester, Woon-

socket and Pawtucket, the Engineers submitted and received authorization for four projects, the West Mill Reservoir and the Worcester Diversion in Massachusetts and the Woonsocket Channel Improvement and Pawtucket Flood Wall in Rhode Island. Not one has been built. The West Mill Reservoir could have been of inestimable value to the downstream communities during the August flood; the Worcester Diversion would have diverted two-thirds of the water which flowed into the city. The Woonsocket project would have given almost complete protection to the northern section of the city instead of widespread ruin. The Pawtucket flood wall would have contained considerable water that flowed into buildings adjoining the stream.

And, I repeat, the August floods might be small in scope to what may happen in the spring.

Elsewhere in New England the picture is the same - projects authorized but not built. In the Thames Basin, seven dams authorized and only one built. The one at Mansfield Hollow in Connecticut paid for itself in the August flood because of the damage averted by downstream communities. In the Housatonic Basin the authorized reservoir at Thomaston, if built, would have averted an estimated 70 millions of dollars in damage to communities like Waterbury, Naugatuck and Arsonia. In the Connecticut Basin the authorized Littleville Dam on the Middle Branch of the Westfield River would have been of invaluable assistance to downstream communities. And as it goes with flood control projects so it is with other Civil works. Ten navigation studies along Rhode Island's coastline have Congressional authorization but money to complete the studies is available for only one - Apponaug Cove in Narragansett Bay. Authorized also are improve-

ment studies for the Providence and Seekonk Rivers but money is not available to start them. Beach erosion studies at Matunuck and Misquamicut have been authorized but lacking funds.

In Wickford Harbor the existing and previous improvements have cost about \$135,000, of which about \$110,000 has been expended by the Federal Government and about \$25,000 jointly by the State and Local Governments. Wickford Harbor, however, according to local representatives must have three (3) additional major improvements if it is to compete with other harbors in attracting resort business. Those proposed are: dredging a channel and establishing an anchorage in North Cove; raising the existing breakwater to a height of at least five (5) feet above normal tides and dredging an anchorage area behind the north portion of the breakwater, and deepening the existing nine (9) foot channel to approximately twelve (12) feet to the town dock.

Navigation studies along the New England coastline are and have been a continuing responsibility of the Army Engineers. However, the changing pattern of storms and hurricanes in New England in recent years has made such studies more imperative if previous investment of federal, state and local funds are to be preserved.

In the case of Wickford Harbor the suggested studies could ultimately lead to making improvements in a going concern - a harbor geographically located where pleasure boating and fishing attract thousands of persons each year. An engineering estimate has been made that the Wickford Harbor study would require about \$5000.

The Army Engineers are still in the midst of "Operation Noah" but this work which seemed so monumental in the latter days of August now is rolling along in high gear. Soon the temporary features of relief and repair will be over and we must recognize the needs for permanent protection. As the result of the August and October floods, the Army Engineers have taken a look at some of their plans for flood control reservoirs and protective works which have been gathering dust on the shelves for years because of lack of concurrence or of interest by local people. Federal flood control laws require expressions of concurrence and interest on a local level. As a result of this quick on the spot survey, the Army Engineers are convinced that everything they have planned in the past still holds good today with minor revisions and some additions.

Local and State assurances today are no longer a problem. The public is more than alerted because of the serious floods experienced, and is anxious that sufficient funds be appropriated by the Congress for the protection not only of their lives and homes but their businesses.

It is of paramount importance that Congress take prompt action to make funds available to carry out the flood control plans that Congress has already authorized. It is also highly important that sufficient funds be provided to carry out these plans as rapidly as can be efficiently done.

The Corps of Engineers, while recognizing our problem, has as usual been ultraconservative in asking for funds for this area. I have made a careful study of the situation and have sought the technical advice of competent engineers who are acquainted with the specific projects involved. I have been assured that a somewhat larger sum than the amount requested by the Corps of

Engineers could be efficiently utilized this fiscal year. I have therefore introduced a bill which would appropriate \$3,505,000 for this fiscal year for flood control projects in the New England area and in Pennsylvania, which as you all know, also experienced serious damage from floods of the past several months.

I am hopeful that this Congress will see fit to take prompt and favorable action on this bill and thus begin a reasonable program to protect the people and economy of this important section of the Nation.

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