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REPORT  
OF THE  
PORT RARITAN  
DISTRICT COMMISSION  
TO THE  
LEGISLATURE  
OF THE  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

JANUARY 26, 1931

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT  
OF  
PORT RARITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION

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January 26, 1931

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

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The Port Raritan District Commission was created by the 1926 New Jersey Legislature (Chapter 337 P. L. 1926). The Commissioners are nine in number and have the jurisdiction and powers set out in this act.

The Port Raritan District consists of Middlesex County, together with the Raritan River from the head of navigation at New Brunswick to Raritan Bay and all other lands and waters of Raritan Bay and the Arthur Kill contiguous thereto. It is one of the three port commissions in the State of New Jersey, the best known and oldest of which is the port commission formed in conjunction with the State of New York known as the Port of New York Authority. The other port commission is the South Jersey Port Commission which includes Trenton and the important Camden section and all of South Jersey.

## REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY:

Since the last annual report of the Port Raritan District Commission more actual progress has been made than in all the preceding years since the creation of the commission in 1926. It is with some pride that in this the Fourth Annual Report of the Port Raritan District Commission we detail here the successful accomplishments of 1930. It is interesting to note that in our report for the calendar year 1929 we stated our opinion as to the results which might reasonably be expected in 1930 as follows: "We anticipate that 1930 will stand out as a year in which more will be accomplished for the development of waterway transportation in our district than at any other time. We believe that we are on the eve of the actual starting of work in the improvement of channels for which the Commission has been working since its organization."

On a number of occasions in the past representatives of the Port Raritan District Commission have appeared before the Rivers and Harbors Commission of the House of Representatives relative to various projects for the improvement of the waterways lying within the Port Raritan District. The result of their efforts was the inclusion in the largest Rivers and Harbors bill ever passed, which became a law in July, 1930, of the following channel improvements:

1. Change in project depth in upper Raritan River from Washington Canal to head of navigation at New Brunswick to ten feet where bottom is mud and eleven feet where it is rock, at an estimated cost of \$280,000.00.
2. Change in project depth of channel in Raritan Bay and lower Raritan River from main division channel in Raritan Bay to deep pool above New York and Long Branch railroad bridge at Perth Amboy to depth of twenty-five feet at a cost of \$173,000.00.
3. Straightening of channel in South River and change in project depth in Washington Canal and South River to twelve feet at an

estimated cost of \$90,000.00 subject to certain conditions as to local cooperation.

4. Authorization for survey of proposed cut-off channel at Perth Amboy.

5. Straightening of lower reach of South Channel of Raritan River at an estimated cost of \$21,000.00, subject to certain conditions as to local cooperation.

In accordance with this Rivers and Harbors bill there has been appropriated the sum of \$344,000.00 and bids have actually been received and contracts awarded for part of the work. Of this sum \$150,000.00 has been allotted to the improvement of the channel in the upper Raritan River. While this amount is not sufficient to complete the entire improvement, yet it is estimated that it will allow the removal of the rock section for a distance of about one mile from the canal lock at New Brunswick. The removal of this rock will be a great help to navigation and already inquiries have been made of this commission as to when it is expected that this work will be finished. Parties making these inquiries are contemplating the erection of docks along the part of the waterway to be improved. Not only will dangers to navigation be greatly decreased but boats will be able to proceed at a greater speed due to the removal of this rock.

The further sum of \$173,000.00 has been allotted for the dredging of the channel in Raritan Bay and the lower Raritan River. This will complete the entire improvement and when finished will give a channel twenty-five feet in depth and three hundred feet wide from the main division channel in Raritan Bay to the deep pool above the New York and Long Branch railroad bridge at Perth Amboy. Actually this improvement will mean that boats drawing twenty-five feet of water can come into Raritan Bay from the ocean and up the bay and the river as far as Keasby without regard to the tide.

The sum of \$90,000.00 has been appropriated for the completion of the twelve foot project through Washington Canal and South River up to the highway bridge at the Borough of South River. This appropriation is subject to certain conditions as to local cooperation, which conditions are being satisfactorily met and it is anticipated that within a short time the government will advertise for bids for

the dredging of this waterway. The State in accordance with Chapter 31, P. L. 1927, has already expended \$175,000.00 through the Port Raritan District Commission in the dredging of South River from the head of navigation at Old Bridge down to the Raritan River railroad bridge at South River. The benefits which have already resulted from the improvement as thus far completed have shown that this expenditure of money by the State and by the national government was amply justified. Business is increasing rapidly in this section and with adequate water the location of additional plants and the enlargement of the present ones may be confidently expected.

The fourth matter listed above as having been included in the Rivers and Harbors bill recently passed, is the proposed cut-off channel at Perth Amboy. In accordance with the survey provision relating to this, there was a hearing held on November 25, 1930, at the Office of the District Engineer for this district in the Army Building, New York City. Representatives were present from many industries, transportation companies, municipalities and other public bodies including the Port Raritan District Commission and the Port of New York authority. The hearing was a very successful one, and from the statements of those present the need of a cut-off channel was very clearly shown. This channel would connect the New York and New Jersey channels through the Arthur Kill with the Raritan River channel making this connection by constructing the new channel close to the shores of Perth Amboy, and rendering it no longer necessary for navigation to proceed out in Raritan Bay to the Great Bed Light before turning to go up the Kill or up the Raritan. Not only would the distance be substantially decreased but tie-ups and the obstacles to navigation encountered by reason of rough water, which is very often encountered near the light, would be removed. At times, due to weather conditions, boats are delayed two and three days with a consequent loss to their owners and to the public in general which it is impossible to accurately estimate. One shipper alone showed an estimated saving, if this channel is dug of \$25,000.00 a year. It was the general opinion that such a channel in order to meet the needs of navigation should be at least twenty feet deep and have a width of from eight hundred to one thousand feet. We think that the need for this improvement has been conclusively proved

and confidently anticipate a favorable recommendation to Congress in connection with it.

Another item included in the Rivers and Harbors bill provides for the straightening of the lower reach of the South Channel of the Raritan River, and \$21,000.00 has been allotted for this work to be used when certain conditions as to local cooperation have been satisfied. It is stipulated that this improvement shall not be made until satisfactory assurance is given that there will be erected on this channel at least one additional dock and terminal. As yet this condition has not been fulfilled.

As stated in our report dated January 21, 1930, the government has agreed to dredge Woodbridge Creek from Cutter's Dock to the Berry Street Dock at Woodbridge. This was subject, however, to the construction by the Township of Woodbridge of a dock at Berry Street. The dock in question is now in process of construction and the government has practically completed the dredging necessary to bring the ten foot channel up to the Berry Street Dock. It is expected that this channel will aid the present industries on this waterway and also will allow the shipping of stone and gravel to a much closer point to where it is to be used than heretofore.

We wish to again emphasize that we have accomplished a great deal in connection with the projects which were listed in our first report to the Legislature. When the dredging for which money has already been appropriated is completed we believe that the Port Raritan District will begin to reap the benefits which must necessarily result from giving to this district adequate waterway transportation facilities. True, it will still be necessary to obtain the appropriation of additional moneys to complete the upper Raritan project and the efforts of this commission will be centered on this until it has been accomplished. With the new channels and the reasonable increase in commerce which may be expected will come the need for still deeper and wider channels to take care of the increased tonnage and the anticipated needs of the future. The burden of foreseeing those needs and of laying the necessary foundation and taking steps advisable to meet them, rests with this Commission. We are fully aware of our duty and our responsibility and are constantly investigating and studying the various problems which we now have to contend with and which we may expect to be compelled to meet in the future.

With the completion of the dredging now authorized, this Commission anticipates that the need of more and better terminal facilities will make itself felt. By reason of the fact that New Brunswick, several years ago erected a modern municipal freight terminal at the head of navigation of the Raritan River, this need will not exist there. Other parts of the Port Raritan District are not quite so fortunate however, and the investigation and construction of adequate waterway freight terminals will be one of the most important of the duties of his Commission for the next few years.

The pollution of the Raritan River has recently presented a problem of great importance. Possibly it is not wise to call this a recent problem in view of the fact that it has existed for some time. In calling it a recent problem we do so because its importance and the need for some solution has not been felt until the last few years.

For sometime there have been individuals and organizations which have interested themselves in the cleansing of this important waterway. Feeling that there was some need for an incorporated body to take some definite action the Port Raritan District Commission caused a survey to be made to determine the sources and extent of pollution of the Raritan. As a result of this survey the Legislature authorized this Commission to gather further information in connection with this river and to cause an engineering survey to be made to determine the best methods for the successful abatement of pollution. The sum of \$15,000.00 was appropriated for this purpose and the firm of Remington, Vosbury and Goff engaged to do this work. A very satisfactory and complete report was rendered to this Commission, copies of which may be obtained from the Secretary. It is not our purpose to attempt to digest or set out in full this complete and detailed report. We merely wish to state that it showed the necessity of taking steps at once to prevent further pollution, and that the best method was by the construction of separate treatment plants rather than by a trunk sewer extending throughout the entire Raritan Valley. Numerous conferences and meetings have been held with representatives of the municipalities and also some of the larger industries which are concerned. Some progress has been made and very satisfactory assurances of local cooperation furnished. The Commission in its pollution work has had the assistance and advice of the State Board of Health and its officers, and we wish in this report

to express our appreciation of their efforts. It is anticipated that additional legislation will be necessary to allow the municipalities concerned to erect sewage treatment plants. Probably steps will have to be taken by the State Board of Health, and the Attorney General, under legislation already enacted and which is deemed adequate for the purpose, to compel any municipality or industry which objects to doing its part in the removal of pollution to take the necessary steps in relation thereto.

Many other matters of more or less routine nature have occupied the attention of this Commission and its officers. Studies have been and are now being made as to the advisability of a trunk line highway beginning in the Port Raritan District and extending across New Jersey with waterway termini.

The Commission is still interested and firmly believes in the importance of the New Jersey Ship Canal. At the present time this matter is in abeyance, pending another report from the United States District Engineer as to its cost and practical usefulness.

In this report we also wish to express our appreciation for the cooperation and very great assistance which has been rendered the Commission and to which in a large measure the success of the Commission should be attributed. Particularly do we desire to commend the work done by Honorable Harold G. Hoffman, Representative in Congress from the Third Congressional District, Lieutenant Colonel R. T. Ward, United States Army District Engineer for this district, as well as United States Senators, Hamilton F. Kean, David Baird, and more recently the Honorable Dwight W. Morrow. The various committees of the Legislature with which we have come in contact have given full and complete consideration to the matters presented to them by us. Governor Morgan F. Larson, and budget commissioners, John A. Reddan and John C. Feil have studied our requests for appropriations with care and when satisfied of their merit the Governor has included them in his annual budget message. Without the assistance of these efficient and capable public servants our progress would have been necessarily much slower and our objects more difficult of accomplishment.

PORT RARITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION,

By RUSSELL E. WATSON,

Chairman.

## STATUTES

### CHAPTER 337

(P. L. 1926 Pg 767)

*Passed April 1, 1926*

An Act to create the Port Raritan District and to provide for the appointment of the Port Raritan District Commission and the vesting in the commission of appropriate powers and making an appropriation for the expenses of the commission.

### CHAPTER 338

(P. L. 1926 Pg 772)

*Passed April 1, 1926*

An Act authorizing the governing body of any county, borough, city, township or other municipality in this State to raise, appropriate, set aside and devote money or property to the use of any port, harbor, bridge or river commission now or hereafter created by the Legislature of this State and giving to any such local governing body property to the use of any port, harbor or river commission now or hereafter created by the Legislature of this State and giving to any such local governing body the power to prescribe the terms and conditions upon which any such money or property shall be held and used.

### CHAPTER 31

(P. L. 1927 Pg 70)

*Approved March 7, 1927*

An Act authorizing the Port Raritan District Commission to straighten South river, in the county of Middlesex, and making an appropriation therefor.

### CHAPTER 22

(P. L. 1928 Pg 36)

*Approved March 6, 1928*

An Act authorizing the Port Raritan District Commission to investigate the pollution of the Raritan River and to prepare a plan for the purification of the Raritan River and making an appropriation therefor.



