

[Index No. 30—B-118634, Apr. 29, 1966]

OPPORTUNITY FOR SAVINGS BY REDUCING OVERTIME ON REVETMENT
CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE ON THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI
RIVER, CORPS OF ENGINEERS (CIVIL FUNCTIONS), DEPARTMENT OF
THE ARMY

The accompanying report presents our findings regarding the opportunity for savings by use of a 40-hour workweek in lieu of regularly scheduled overtime on revetment construction and maintenance work performed by the Corps of Engineers (Civil Functions), Department of the Army, on the Lower Mississippi River. Revetment construction involves the laying of concrete mattresses at selected bank locations to protect vulnerable bank areas from the eroding action of the river currents.

On the basis of our review, we believe that, in most cases, the Corps of Engineers could accomplish planned revetment work over an extended construction period by using a 40-hour workweek in lieu of scheduled overtime work to accelerate revetment operations. We made an examination of past construction seasons and programs to demonstrate the feasibility of doing this work in the future without the use of regularly scheduled overtime. We estimate that the Corps of Engineers could have realized savings of about \$521,000 during fiscal years 1962 through 1965 by eliminating scheduled overtime in revetment construction activities performed by the Memphis District of the Corps of Engineers on the Lower Mississippi River.

The Department of the Army advised us that the Corps of Engineers must consider many factors in planning and carrying out this complex land and marine construction operation. The primary factors which the Department stated must be considered relate to adverse river stages and weather conditions. In determining that a 40-hour workweek was feasible, we gave consideration to the possible effect of adverse river stages and weather conditions on the Corps' ability to perform the work.

The Department stated that failure to complete the yearly program would subject the bank areas to additional erosion and could result in damage to partially completed revetments. We believe that many of the potential problems mentioned by the Department would be present regardless of whether the work was performed by using scheduled overtime or on a 40-hour workweek basis with overtime limited to that required after it becomes apparent that necessary work cannot be completed because only a portion of the authorized revetment work can be accomplished in any one construction season. Also, the risks are present in any year because, as district officials informed us, revetment work is most effectively performed when erosion of the banks has progressed to a certain stage. Prior to or after the time this stage has been reached, the effectiveness of performing revetment work is reduced.

We are therefore recommending that the Chief of Engineers direct the Lower Mississippi Valley Division to use a 40-hour workweek in programming revetment construction by the Memphis District and that overtime be limited to that required after it becomes apparent that necessary work cannot be accomplished on a 40-hour workweek basis.