

Mr. BROOKS. I had occasion a couple of weekends ago to inspect our Coast Guard station in Texas on the coast and it was in good order. It was well organized and all the men were busy.

Admiral SMITH. Thank you.

Mr. BROOKS. It is a very interesting job down there. It is very pleasant most of the time, except when the water is rough and they have to go out in it.

Admiral SMITH. That is when our calls come in.

Mr. BROOKS. That is right.

I have one other question. I have recently seen in the paper that the Coast Guard has approved some new lifejackets, but some of the stories indicated the jackets were somewhat bulky, and though quite safe for being thrown overboard at sea, I wonder if they would be practical for boating in inland waterways, lakes, et cetera, and if you might not consider the advisability of researching and approving some type of lifejacket that children and others could wear while boating, for example, and for water sports that would not be too bulky to encourage people to wear them while they are in the boats—something that would give them an affirmative buoyancy without being of the same design that would keep them afloat in high seas out in the middle of the gulf, or the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean.

Admiral SMITH. We have been looking at this matter for a number of years and currently we have this very thing under consideration.

As a matter of information, at the present time there is a wide spectrum of lifesaving devices that are approved by the Coast Guard that are available to the merchant marine and the recreational boater.

Mr. BROOKS. That have been approved?

Admiral SMITH. Yes; have been approved by the Coast Guard for use as a safety item. One of the problems has been the very thing you mentioned—in order to get the desired safety requirements and flotation some of these jackets have been so bulky that the recreational boatman has been reluctant to use them.

One of the things that we are considering now is the matter of whether we can approve an inflatable device. This is one way of getting a compact device. There are a number of jackets that are appearing on the market now that not only have some flotation built into them but they are also very good protective clothing when you are on the water. This would be a good combination.

Mr. BROOKS. Would you give us a report on that for the record? It is an increasing problem in the United States, as millions of people have more free time, and they spend a lot of it on water.

Admiral SMITH. Yes, sir; we will furnish a copy for the record.

(The information follows:)

LIFESAVING DEVICES

The Coast Guard study of recreational boating safety, conducted in late 1967, revealed that in the case of accidents which prove fatal by drowning, lifesaving devices will be of little use unless being worn when the victim falls into the water. The study disclosed the statistic that in 1966, of 459 fatalities in which it was known that lifesaving devices were in the boat, 360 cases showed that the devices were not used. This suggests a need for increased educational efforts directed toward recognition of the time-proven concepts that in small open boats, life preservers should always be worn by children and nonswimmers and that when rough weather is encountered on any type of boat, or when in hazardous waters, life preservers should be worn by everyone.