

"They musta spent their money hiring two four-headed kids to knock together all the old bum dope for this. Doubt if any of those heads ever looked at any more water than was in the whisky glass. Can't find any indication of any original research at all. Can't find much sense in the conclusions. Can find plenty of contradictions. If this is the 'full and complete investigation' Congress ordered, God save us."

It was obvious that The Skipper had read the document with even more than his usual care and we were somewhat more than amused by some of his comments. In one case the report notes that of present anti-pollution devices, the highly efficient incinerator type was deemed too dangerous, the maceration-disinfection gadgets were not effective, and holding tanks were most effective and "adaptable to all sizes and types of vessels"; though elsewhere it observed that the tanks were "relatively large and heavy" and would be "difficult to install in existing larger craft."

Just how all that fitted together logically, brought a note from The Skipper that succinctly pointed out: "This oughta give a couple of those heads headaches."

Even more headachy were some of the report's "statistics" which blithely jumped from one source to another to pick up whatever figure seemed to be, obviously, the most impressive.

For instance, the report mentions at length the industry estimates of eight million boats and forty million people using them, or five to a boat straight across the board. Yet in another paragraph in the report, it cites a detailed, but anonymous, study of some 6,830 voyages out of an unspecified marina in boats larger than fifteen feet which carried a total of 24,459 passengers, or an average of 3.59 passengers.

But its analysis of current boat census figures is even more confusing when the report makes an attempt to determine the number of craft equipped with heads. Here it shamefully intermixes Coast Guard registration figures and industry estimates which for years have been about one hundred percent apart (the Coast Guard counts a little over four million boats registered; the industry estimates eight million registered and unregistered).

The report studies industry figures and estimates that ninety percent of inboard and inboard-outboard equipped craft carry heads. Then it estimates that eighty percent of the 361,000 outboard boats sold from 1959 to 1966 also are so equipped and fifty percent of "sailboats", though in another part this classification includes only unpowered sailboats, mostly of the class racing types.

Opposite that was The Skipper's note: "So all Lightnings carry thundermugs?"

Then the report goes on to analyze the Coast Guard counts as substantiating "correlation" which we gather to mean proof. It lists eighty percent of the Coast Guard count of 1,291,000 boats above sixteen feet as equipped with heads, a highly questionable conclusion to say the least. But then, to reach the 1,300,000 heads estimated from industry figures, they properly add the twelve thousand documented yachts, and improperly throw in the industry estimate of half the class sailboats to bring the two figures into shooting range.

The Skipper scrawled across this bit of statistical legerdemain the simple statement: "I'll be damned."

But a couple of the report's conclusions had obviously been the cause of the loudest imprecations that had flowed from the sanctorum. The offending sentences had been underlined, circled, and squared in notably heavier lines which indicated The Skipper had really borne down on his tortured pen.

One of them, noting the present imperfections of anti-pollution equipment commented: "... but the desire for Utopia should not be allowed to becloud and confuse the need for action today. Immediate requirements demand that existing technologies and devices be used to effect a realistic degree of water pollution from watercraft."

The Skipper had noted: "Even if they don't work?" and had labelled the whole thing with a scathing "sophomoric."

But there was still another sentence that brought The Skipper to an unprintable boil, particularly since he is one who recognizes pollution as one of the major current sociopolitical problems, and has long maintained that all efforts should be concentrated on the principal elements of the problem, rather than being dissipated in attacks on the minor "fringe areas." The sentence read:

"Unless we control watercraft waste discharges, the full benefits from other pollution control investments will not be fully realized."