

out. This began in November 1964, when 13,000 civilians were employed by the Air Force at the base.

During this period, our main objective, locally and through the efforts of Task Force 200, has been to offset this economic impact promptly. The development of the Theodore Park was one effort by our local people to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps.

We cannot finalize plans for the maximum Theodore development until we know the status of deep-water accessibility. The county of Mobile and the State of Alabama have provided first-class road detours made necessary when a bridge was removed for the first phase of the canal.

The design of a bridge replacement is dependent upon the dimension and clearance requirements of the channel.

We are convinced that the project is fully economically justified and we earnestly request that you provisionally authorize it, subject to approval of the Secretary of the Army upon completion of his report, so that we can proceed with our plans in this total development; and rapidly recover from the effects on our economy of the Brookley Air Force Base closure by the Federal Government.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to present this to you.

Mr. BLATNIK. General, you have made a very effective presentation and the participation of your State, your municipal and industry people in this joint comprehensive industrial complex is a very intriguing one and obviously very well thought out.

Our problem is a technical one.

General WILSON. We recognize that.

Mr. BLATNIK. And I assure you Congressman Edwards we will work very closely with you to see if we can get the processing that is required.

General WILSON. Mr. Chairman, we recognize this is asking a lot and it has been done a few times in the past.

We recognize the safeguard of the report must be accepted by the Secretary of the Army and the President favorably.

What we are really asking is that you approve it, if the report turns out to be strong and sturdy and this, in turn, will let us go ahead and get the bridge designed and get the other things done which otherwise will wait.

Mr. Chairman, the community has really been hit by the closure of this Air Force facility.

I am proud of the community for having swallowed it after a fight and for making efforts on the opposite side.

We have tried to bring in new industry. We have exceeded our goal of \$200 million in 5 years by getting \$300 million, to date.

We have picked up our employment almost to where we have caught up but we need this boost in order to bring it back where it was and give us a chance to go.

Mr. BLATNIK. You said it very well.

Are there any questions?

Mr. MCCARTHY. Mr. Chairman, I would just like to make the observation that I am very familiar with Mobile, inasmuch as the company that I was associated with for a dozen years prior to coming to Congress has a large plant in Mobile and has had for many years; that is the National Gypsum Co.