

wrecks that you see, which I believe you interpreted as being marsh areas.

Mr. HARSHA. What would you remove, then, the trees and the brush, too?

Mr. GURNEE. Yes. We would remove the wooden portion of the vessels down to the natural bottom of the stream.

Mr. HARSHA. You said that you believe there should be some contribution. You have not explained to me fully how you arrived at 50/50 contribution.

Mr. GURNEE. That is an arbitrary determination, Mr. Harsha.

Mr. GROVER. Mr. Gurnee, is there any precedent for the Corps of Engineers going into beautification activities, if I may use that term?

Mr. GURNEE. Not in specific legislation that I recall. But we do, of course, consider beautification in connection with our normal project design and construction.

Mr. GROVER. As I understand it, we do not have a specific hazard here, except that a potential debris of flotsam and jetsam drift possibility, which seems to be fairly remote. And not having the ultimate objective of improving the navigability and removing hazards, the primary objective here seems to be one of scenic and recreational.

I was just wondering whether the appropriate forum would be the Interior Committee and the petitioner, the Interior Committee, with complementary thought or supplementary thought or activity up at Interior, should they have approval of reclaiming this area for scenic recreation purposes?

In other words, with all due respect, I am wondering whether we are putting the cart before the horse, as Mr. Harsha says.

Mr. GURNEE. Of course the reference of these bills to committees is done in-house over here. I would think that one thing that might have influenced the assignment is the fact that this is the type of work that the corps normally engages in, rather than some other agency of government.

Mr. GROVER. Living on the great South Bay, Long Island, Empire State, I know a lot of areas in our navigable waters and our bay of some 80 miles long, which have the intrusion of old pilings and old barges, where the adjacent landowners might very happily go into a 50-to-50 removal proposition. I am just wondering whether you are establishing a precedent without the prior prerequisite of the Interior Department's report and their intentions of reclaiming for that purpose.

General NOBLE. I would think the nearest precedent is the precedent of the abandoned ship. We have a multiple abandonment of ships involved here.

In the case of an abandoned ship, the corps does and has authority and responsibility to move in there and remove the wreckage from the navigable waterways.

And on that point of view, one could argue that the corps should have already moved in a long time ago and removed every one of these vessels at total Government expense. But that is only one point of view.

Mr. HARSHA. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. GROVER. Yes.