

TRANSPORTATION WAS ONCE A BIG PROBLEM

Fleet of Ships Brings Supplies to Workmen on Trail

When any large enterprise is contemplated, one of the first problems that confronts the executive staff is the transportation of men and supplies. This problem was vitally important when construction was started on the Tamiami Trail at a point over one hundred miles from any rail head. The Trail, as everyone knows, passes through a virgin country, traversed by no improved roads but only paths which twist and turn through the wilderness, barely passable during the dry season and absolutely impassable during the rainy season.

The only practical means of transportation available was by water. Consequently it was necessary to commission and maintain a fleet of boats. These boats are still in use, and range in size from a one-man propelled skiff, to a sixty horsepower Diesel propelled tug. With this fleet came the demand for a ship yard for hauling out and repair purposes. This has gradually grown, until now the ship yard can boast of two boat ways capable of handling any boat up to sixty feet in length and of fifty gross tons.

Supplies Carried by Water

For a long time after operations were started on the Trail, the only possible transportation between Everglades Port Du Pont, and the Trail was by small power boats, and until very recently the only means of transportation and communication with the outside world was by boat. Mail and supplies were brought in by boat for a number of years, and at the present time all of the supplies used in the actual construction work on the trail and in maintaining the entire community are brought in by boat. The volume of these supplies is enormous--the consumption of gasoline alone averaging one thousand gallons per day on Trail operations, plus five hundred gallons which are consumed daily by the community. Supplying this demand keeps a ten thousand gallon tanker on the run between Everglades and Port Myers almost constantly. Another item is dynamite, which must be brought here in carload lots at least once a month by barge and tug. These are only two of the many items that go to make up the day's work of the fleet

Under the efficient direction of Mr. H. L. Bristol, the fleet carries on with J. T. "Dode" Russel as Commander and John Osteen as Captain. There are no loud shouts of acclaim, for silently the vessels, whether the large tugs "Daughrill" and "Budde" or the tiny bateaux at the "front" do their bit.