

EXECUTIVE OFFICES  
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Louisiana has worked out a three-way approach to its water management and drainage problem that merits investigation in South Carolina, where "something is needed to bring into production several million acres of little value now to landowners and the state."

That was the highlight of a report made this week to Governor J. Strom Thurmond by Representative T. Manly Hudson of Greer, chairman of a committee named by the Governor to study drainage and water management problems in South Carolina and elsewhere.

Members of the committee going to Louisiana in November were Representative Hudson, who is Chairman of the House Agricultural Committee; M. E. Abrams of Whitmire, chairman of the Senate Agricultural Committee; State Senator Henry C. Walker of Ridgeland; State Representative Don V. Richardson of Georgetown; C. B. Player of Bishopville, a supervisor of the Lynches River Soil Conservation District; and C. P. Guess of Denmark, a supervisor of the Edisto Soil Conservation District, who served as an alternate representing J. G. Murray of the Charleston District.

Accompanying the committee were W. P. Law of Clemson, designated by Dr. R. F. Poole to represent Clemson College, A. F. Ruff, Assistant State Conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service, of Columbia; and E. A. Schlautt, Regional Drainage Engineer of the Soil Conservation Service, Spartanburg. District Supervisor Guess also was designated to represent the State Farm Bureau on the trip.

Before going to Louisiana, the committee agreed that "any program considered should not be limited to drainage, but

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J. Strom Thurmond  
Governor

should rather be one of over-all water management so that all sections of the state would benefit."

The committee, in reporting to Governor Thurmond, pointed out that actual conditions, both as to soils and farming, vary widely between Louisiana and South Carolina. Then the committee added significantly: "But the damaging effect of excess water on crops and pastures is the same in both state."

The three-way approach to Louisiana's problem of water management, including drainage, was summarized by the committee as follows:

"1. It is the farmer's responsibility to manage the water on his own land with the help of Soil Conservation Service technicians through farmer-controlled soil conservation districts. (South Carolina is solidly covered by soil conservation district.)

"2. The state and the parishes (counties) have a responsibility in providing suitable major outlets for excess water from groups of farms. The Louisiana Public Works Department has more than 300 engineers to direct this work.

"3. On major drainage problems, beyond the state's limitations, the U. S. Army Engineers can provide a service."

Committee Chairman Hudson also told the Governor, "Among the very large number of contacts made with farmers, business men, bankers, government officials, and others in both the hill sections and in the low-lying sections (of Louisiana), we found every individual and group representative entirely sympathetic with the state's financial participation in the parish drainage and the soil conservation district programs."

The committee observed that in the water-management work in Louisiana, "The state's contribution to the solution of Louisiana's water-management problem is a permanent investment that brings in new agricultural production and therefore new wealth for the state.

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In practically all interviews, we were told that yields of cotton, corn, potatoes, clovers, and Dallis grass and other pasture mixtures were increased from one-third to double as a result of the work."

Louisiana bears 40 percent of the cost of providing major drainage outlets for groups of farmers and the parish (county) 60 percent, the committee report said.

In Avoyelles Parish, which the committee considered an average parish in its requirements for drainage work, the group said: "We found that farm lands were valued for assessment purposes at from \$20 to \$50 per acre. The tax rate is 37.5 mills. This parish has spent a total of \$350,000 on the state-parish drainage program; 60 percent or \$210,000 of which was raised by the parish through bond issues. To pay for its share of this construction cost, the parish has included within its 37.5 mill tax rate the sum of 4 mills. Also included is an additional 1.5 mills which is levied for parish-wide maintenance of these drainage works. This amounts to a total collection for ditch maintenance of about \$25,000 annually."

Copies of Louisiana legislation authorizing the state's participation with parishes in the drainage program were attached to the committee's report to the Governor.

Prior to the trip, Governor Thurmond conferred with Governor Earl K. Long of Louisiana to make advance arrangements, and the committee conferred with Governor Long, officials of the Louisiana Department of Public Works, leaders of the Louisiana Association of Soil Conservation District Supervisors, parish officials, state legislators, and Soil Conservation Service officials, as well as with farmers, bankers, merchants, and others.