

TRANSCRIPT OF ADMIRAL VICKERY'S INTERVIEW
WITH MR. RICHARD L. TURNER OF THE UNITED STATES NEWS
NOVEMBER 18, 1943, 3:30 P.M.

Mr. Turner: I am writing an article for our current issue on the post-war shipping situation, and I wondered if you would tell me something about your ideas on what we should do with all these ships we are going to have.

Admiral Vickery: I think it is too soon to get out a definite plan. We are working on it, but I don't believe we know enough about the final picture. I don't want to come out with a definite plan at this time when I have a whole committee and the entire industry working on the damn thing. I am just not prepared to say what I think can be done. We don't know enough yet. I think even my friends in the State Department would be put out if I came out with a plan now.

Mr. Turner: You do have some general ideas on the subject?

Admiral Vickery: I wouldn't want to put out my ideas until they are better formulated. When they go out they ought to be the Commission's ideas. Any that might be my personal views on the subject might disagree with those of the Commission, and people would attribute mine to the Commission. So I can't express them until the Commission passes on them.

I hate to be disappointing, but I'm going to be on that one. I hope we will avoid some of the mistakes that were made after the last war.

(more)

Mr. Turner: I was asking Mr. Richards if there is a guess as to what percentage of the World's merchant fleet we will hold after the war.

Admiral Vickery: I would say that we will hold 40 per cent, depending upon the length of the war.

Mr. Turner: Well, I don't know what to ask you now.

Admiral Vickery: I'm glad because I wouldn't know what to answer. I don't think I ought to be premature on the damn thing and put out some ideas that are not passed on by the Commission.

Mr. Turner: If you have any thoughts that you want to give me for background, not for attribution to yourself or to the Commission, that would be helpful.

Admiral Vickery: All I can say is that there was a hell of a lot of Axis shipping in the pre-war days. Are we going to expect the Japanese and the Germans to take back their shipping, or are we going to help them rehabilitate their shipping? Personally, I'm not enthusiastic about that picture. In other words, if there are eight or ten million tons of foreign shipping somebody ought to do something about it.

Mr. Turner: You mean in terms of business that can be done?

Admiral Vickery: That is right. After all, shipping is only a tool in the damn thing. What we're really talking about is trade. If we develop the trade, the shipping becomes the instrument by which trade is developed, and at the same time the trade itself will increase shipping.

I happen to be one of those birds that are not the pessimistic type, one of those who believe that the world trade is going to be larger after this is over than it was before. And I think the import business in this country may be larger.

If trade doesn't develop there won't be any shipping; there isn't any point in running empty ships around. And I would like to see steamship lines hooked up with the development of trade, not just a single carrier. That has been part of the British success.

Mr. Turner: For so much I am very grateful.

Admiral Vickery: It isn't very much.