Save the Lighthouse

The recent report in newspapers to the effect that Vice Admiral Merlin O'Neill has decided to raze the Stamford Lighthouse in the year nineteen fifty three came as a shock to Residents of Connecticut, especially Native Sons and Daughters in this area, who look upon the Lighthouse as a friend. They have a deep sentimental regard for this landmark. Is this proposed change justified? Many people do not think so! Admiral O'Neill claims it would result in a saving of fourteen thousand five hundred dollars a year. Stamford Harbormaster Captain John Rylo does not agree with that estimate. He states maintenance cost of Lighthouse is a little over seven thousand dollars a year.

The Admiral plans to erect on the site of the Lighthouse an open steel structure with new beacons and horns attached to it, with a mile long copper cable leading from same to station on shore operated by a one man crew. A great many people do not approve of his plan!

What about the cost of this proposed change? Admiral O'Neill has said nothing about that! I think said plan would prove to be a costly economy! I believe it would jeopardize the lives and safety of too many people!

Vice Admiral O'Neill also wants to relieve from duty the three Coast Guardsmen now stationed in the Lighthouse. Has this gentleman ever visited Connecticut in the Yachting Season?

If he did, he would realize how important Light and crew are, to the safety of hundreds of owners of small pleasure craft, many of them owned and skippered by young boys and girls. A sudden squall can be a serious affair amongst so many small craft!

As sound travels further over water than it does on land, Lighthouse crew from their vantage point of a mile off shore can hear and see great distances. With their twenty four hour patrol duty, and ship to shore communications system, they can dispatch aid quickly to any disabled boat and persons in need of help.

Through the years -- stories of many of these rescues have never reached the newspapers. Because of its sturdy construction, Lighthouse has been able to stand the ravages of three hurricanes. It came through the nineteen fifty hurricane unscathed -- not even a pane of glass was broken! Nearly a million tons of commercial cargo in and out of Stamford Harbor every year guided and watched over by the Stamford Lighthouse. The Federal Transportation Tax on this vast tonnage should adequately justify such cost as may now be necessary to maintain Lighthouse.

The Lighthouse is in good condition. In August of nineteen fifty one, two new diesel motors were installed to run horn and light generator compressors.

The Federal Tax on this vast tonnage should adequately justify such cost as may be now necessary to maintain Stamford Lighthouse. We would also like to keep Lighthouse crew of alert trained Coast Guardsmen. As servicemen, they cannot go out on strike!

"New England is steeped in tradition." We treasure our landmarks! Stamford Lighthouse - Faithful Sentinel through the night casting its friendly beam of light over the waters of Long Island Sound.

Please, Mr. President, Save our "Grand Old Guardian of the Marines," from destruction!

Respectfully,

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