Fabulous Southwest Louisiana

Every year of the past two decades has seen tangible signs of Southwest Louisiana burgeoning into a healthy, prosperous region destined for a never-ending future of economic well-being.

particularly during the past year have the eight parishes comprising the popularly called "Evangeline area" moved forward with a tremendous vitality that augurs wonderfully well for the continued prosperity of this region.

With today's special edition, the Advertiser tells the success story of Southwest Louisiana and pays tribute to these parishes that have grasped the opportunities at hand to stride along with the times: Lafayette, Iberia, Vermilion, St. Mary, Acadia, St. Landry, St. Martin and Evangeline.

A difficulty presents itself when one attempts to single out the dominating factor responsible — for the powerful upsurge evident in every area of our community life. The reason for this continuous wave of prosperity and material well-being lies in a combination of circumstances. Nature's gifts surround us in plenitude. The tenor of the times demands accelerated action if a community is not to grow stagnant. A forward-looking populace in the midst of natural riches is not content to coast along on an antiquated bus of economy but wants to be jet-propelled along the tide of good fortune.

No phase of community life was untouched by the magic wand of progress in 1954. Civic, social and religious life joined hands to hasten the good life. Oil and agriculture engaged in friendly rivalry to coax more bounties from generous Mother Earth and the sea. Education kept a steady pace as young and old of the area absorbed knowledge to better equip themselves to improve their socio-economic status. Business, industry, utilities, transportation — each forged ahead in the untiring effort for community improvement.

Concretely, the fabulous growth of Southwest Louisiana can be easily measured in terms of money, acreage, population. The real criterion, however, of anything that can truly be called progressive is nothing physical, despite the emphasis on materialism in a 20th century civilization. We have progressed only to the degree that we have improved our status with our fellowman. And here, in our closely-knit, yet tolerant region close to the Gulf where natural resources continue waiting to be tapped almost without end, we have achieved a goodly measure of success in this respect.

Our success in obtaining the comfortable physical things has not dulled our perception to what should be the primary purpose of a people: happier living in harmonious surroundings. We believe that the expansion of Southwest Louisiana is only comparatively beginning. We are striding ahead in seven-league boots, fashioned from the sturdy leather of confidence, and we have the inner-satisfaction of knowing we are at peace with one another.