

now before this committee, in fact it is in the pending omnibus bill, a recommendation made by the engineers more than 2 years ago, contained in House Document 230, Seventy-sixth Congress, first session, for the enlargement of the Intracoastal Waterway of Louisiana and Texas from its present dimensions of a 9-foot depth with a 100-foot bottom width, to a 12-foot depth and a bottom width of 125 feet, the estimated cost of that improvement being \$5,200,000. That item was also in the river and harbor bill passed nearly 2 years ago, which met with a Presidential veto.

It is my understanding that there is now being considered by the Board of Engineers—and I think I am correctly informed—a proposal to enlarge the Intracoastal Waterway from New Orleans east, so that, assuming, if we may, that that proposal will receive the same consideration as the enlargement of the canal west of the Mississippi, there will be nothing new in this bill, so far as the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway from Corpus Christi, Tex., to St. Joe, Fla., is concerned.

There is also in the river and harbor bill which your committee has reported an item for the completion of the Intracoastal Waterway from Corpus to the Rio Grande Valley, on the basis of a 9-foot depth. That report is in House Document 402, Seventy-seventh Congress, first session.

So that, so far as the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway is concerned, as contained in the bill now before you, the only new proposal is the enlargement of the canal from Corpus Christi to the valley, a distance of 129 miles, so that the entire project might have a depth of 12 feet.

The CHAIRMAN. In order to make it uniform.

Mr. MILLER. To make it uniform; yes.

I might say in this connection that 2 years ago, when the commerce on the Intracoastal Waterway of Louisiana and Texas was probably less than half what it was last year, the engineers recommended the greater depth, so that the then existing commerce might be handled more expeditiously and more economically.

Mr. DONDERO. What would there be at the southern end of the canal which would justify the extension of it to the Rio Grande? What commodity would there be there?

Mr. MILLER. We have here this morning from the Rio Grande Valley four prominent and well-informed gentlemen who will appear later and who can give you that information very much in detail. We have Mr. F. M. Hofmokol, director of the port at Brownsville; Mr. James E. Bowie, director of the port at Port Isabel; Mr. Dan Murphy, of Harlingen; and Mr. John H. Shary, of Mission.

The information which they will submit will be not only intensely interesting, but will show the really tremendous tonnage which will be handled by the canal in and out of the Rio Grande Valley.

The CHAIRMAN. We had a hearing nearly a year ago on the ports embraced in the omnibus bill.

Mr. MILLER. Not only will the canal provide a cheaper method of transport for the commodities produced in the valley, but it will relieve greatly the strain upon the railroads, because all of the commerce of that section has been forced to go to the railroads, due to the practical cessation of all ocean shipping.