

ample opportunity to be heard. Texas is not only a long distance from Washington, but it is rather difficult to get here now. This is almost a matter of life and death to a great industry which has been the foundation and backbone of the progress and development of the Southwest during the past 10 or 15 years.

Mr. RANKIN. One thing that I think is puzzling the committee, and I know it is puzzling to me, is the necessity for this change of route, and I am wondering if it would be better to have a statement from the engineer officers on that question, so we may get that proposition fixed in our minds first.

The CHAIRMAN. There is no route designated in the bill.

Mr. RANKIN. I understand there is a proposal to change the route of the canal so that, instead of going across Florida, after driving down the St. Johns River to Fort Inglis, a distance of probably 85 miles, it will cut across to St. Joe, which is a distance of about 280 miles. The only excuse I can see for that—and that is what I want to ask the engineers about—is that there is a question of whether or not the other route through the open Gulf could be safely used all the time. As I understand it, the route over to St. Joe could be used by barges practically all the time, and I understand that for 15 days, perhaps, the route first proposed through the Gulf of Mexico could not be navigated by those barges. By using the Gulf route from the St. Johns to Port Inglis you would not only save a great deal in distance and time, but a great deal of cost could be saved by using that route which is provided for in the rivers and harbors bill.

Mr. MILLER. I think I can state the position of the proponents on that: We are here for the sole purpose of trying to show, not only the economic justification for this project, but the great emergency which exists and which cries out for immediate relief. With respect to the particular route that the engineers advise, we take the position, as we always do, that whatever the Army engineers recommend, in our judgment, is the thing that should be done.

Mr. RANKIN. I appreciate that, and am inclined to follow the engineers, but I am a little confused as to the necessity for this change of route, and I wanted to question the engineers about it.

Mr. MILLER. I think I state the case correctly when I say that. The matter was submitted to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors several weeks ago, by resolution of this committee, and our thought was that pending the receipt of the Board's report we might come before your committee and make a record. General Reybold, the chief of engineers, is here and I hope will make some recommendation.

The CHAIRMAN. The bill under consideration does not provide that tankers would navigate the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean, but would use this inland route.

Mr. RANKIN. I so understood, and that is why I wanted to question the engineers concerning this proposed change. I am sure that I would like to have some information about it, and I feel that the other members of the committee would like to inquire into the desirability or necessity of changing the course of this route.

Mr. MILLER. I know that your usual procedure is to first hear from departmental officials and then hear other witnesses. I notice that General Reybold is here.