

Mr. DE BARDELEBEN. I am not in a position to answer that question.

Mr. RANKIN. It would be about 1,000 miles nearer.

Mr. DE BARDELEBEN. We operate down the Warrior.

Mr. RANKIN. No; it would not be on the Warrior, but on the Tombigbee.

Mr. DE BARDELEBEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. RANKIN. You would be traveling in slack water coming up stream, because there would be locks on the Tombigbee.

Mr. DE BARDELEBEN. The development of any waterway is very advantageous in this country.

Mr. RANKIN. It would save almost 1,000 miles in distance, and besides, when you go up the Mississippi River, you fight terrific current all the way up. That more than doubles the fuel cost.

Mr. BOYKIN. How long do you think it would take to deepen this canal to 12 feet and widen it to 125 feet?

Mr. DE BEDELEBEN. That would depend on the number of dredges you put in.

Mr. BOYKIN. If you really went after it, how long do you think it would take?

Mr. DE BARDELEBEN. I am not qualified to answer that.

Mr. RANKIN. It is done with hydraulic dredges, and it would not take long.

Mr. DE BARDELEBEN. That is right.; it could be done very rapidly.

Mr. RANKIN. We have dredges now idle, have we not?

Mr. DE BARDELEBEN. I cannot say as to that. They have some of them working in that area. They have five or six dredges working down at Higgins Point.

Mr. RANKIN. You would be surprised at the amount of soil and earth that one of those dredges moves.

The CHAIRMAN. Are there any further questions, gentlemen? Thank you, sir.

Mr. MILLER. Mr. Chairman, apropos of the question which Representative Boykin just asked the witness as to the availability of dredging equipment, I think this should be called to the attention of the committee. It is probably a fact that much of the dredging equipment of the country is now engaged. This project should be authorized and then the question of priority will be determined by those in authority as to whether this particular project is more important than some of those upon which this equipment is now being used. Witnesses appearing before the committee now can hardly answer the question.

There is one phase of the matter that I think, Mr. Chairman, should be called to the attention of the committee before we present the next witness, and that is the purpose we had in mind in presenting Mr. De Bardeleben: Most of the commodities which are produced in such great abundance immediately adjacent to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, particularly petroleum products and sulfur, are natural water-transportation products. They are bulky and low in value, and the natural normal method of transporting them is by water.

These products have been forced to rail by reason of the almost complete cessation of coastwise steamship service and the inadequacy of equipment upon our inland waterways. That is chiefly responsible for the very heavy burden which has been placed on the railroads.