

other commodities that would move in both directions over this great intracoastal canal system if we once connected the north and south inland waters of the Atlantic coast with the east and west Gulf canal.

To one intimately acquainted with what is happening in the way of low-cost transportation on the present canal traversing the Gulf area, the possibilities of this wedding of the Gulf and Atlantic canals stands out like the go-ahead signal of a green light.

I would be subject to criticism did I not also emphasize the dangers and delays of rough open waters and hazardous bridges encountered in the navigation of Lake Pontchartrain; however, the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors has had this link of the Intracoastal Canal under investigation, and has recently held public hearings concerning it. The data produced at these hearings, I am convinced, was sufficient to demonstrate to the Board that the immediate improvement of this short section of the canal was of the utmost importance to the present national emergency.

Mr. PITTENGER. That was true last year, was it not?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Except that the national emergency is more pronounced now than last year.

Mr. PITTENGER. It is worse now than a year ago?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes. The hearings which were held on this project will be productive of a great deal of information with regard to the tonnage of gasoline from Texas through New Orleans, to Mobile, to northern Florida, and so far as the canal goes. The hearings show that the tonnage would be increased from 30 to 40 percent with the same equipment that is now being used. It would be transported that much quicker, without having to provide any additional equipment. There are about seven bridges that would be eliminated by using this shorter route.

Mr. PITTENGER. You testified before the Rivers and Harbors Committee last year, did you not?

Mr. ALEXANDER. No, sir; it has been several years since I appeared before this committee.

The improvement of this section consists of the construction of approximately 23 miles of canal through the marsh from the Industrial Canal at New Orleans to the Mississippi Sound near the Rigollets, following a line just south of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad; the first 7 miles of this improvement beginning at the Industrial Canal at New Orleans and extending to the new Higgins Shipyard is presently being dredged.

Mr. PITTENGER. If you wait to get legislation through Congress, they will have to dig it themselves.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Perhaps one is a war measure and the other was not.

Mr. PITTENGER. Nobody seems to know.

Mr. ALEXANDER. The Industrial Canal at New Orleans, above referred to, is a canal about 5 miles long connecting the Mississippi River with Lake Pontchartrain and was constructed by the board of commissioners of the port of New Orleans during, and for the purpose of aiding, the prosecution of World War No. 1, and at a cost to the board of approximately \$20,000,000.

We did not wait for an act of Congress.

Mr. PITTENGER. We have had one or two other projects that had better not wait for an act of Congress.