

Mr. ALEXANDER. It would be just a question of the equipment—of getting the barges.

Mr. DONDERO. The waterway is there.

Mr. ALEXANDER. The waterway is there; and in this west area we can take the 12,000-barrel barge and hook a tug up with 2 or 3 of them; and that represents a 50-car load, each barge, 50 tank cars.

Mr. DONDERO. It seems to me that would provide some help in an emergency of this kind.

Mr. ALEXANDER. There is no doubt about it.

The CHAIRMAN. However, the 175,000 barrels that moves on the Mississippi do not get to the Atlantic seaboard.

Mr. ALEXANDER. No; that is used inland.

The CHAIRMAN. For domestic use.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. You build barges and tugs out of steel. Are you constructing very many at the present time?

Mr. ALEXANDER. We do not have a large yard. We have been engaged in marine construction for quite a number of years. In fact I was with the engineers in Cuba in 1899, and I have been interested in this movement ever since, directly or indirectly. And several years ago, about 8 or 9 years ago, we started to build barges and tugs for our own use, and about that time this enormous oil development took place in western Louisiana and Texas, and we started selling them, giving them to them as they wanted. When the war came, even when they started the construction of the three locks in Panama, before we got into the war to any extent, the War Department wanted to know how many barges we could furnish and outlined a program of about 50 or 60 steel barges and a half dozen tugs; and since building them we have finished some for the Canadian Government. We sent two large tugs out of Panama City down to Fort Myers. We have been building some for the War Department—

Mr. SMITH. Are you having any difficulty in getting steel priorities from the War Production Board?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Our system of building is this—and we practiced that ourselves and have been for a long time since the War Department came down and asked about these tugs and barges, they did not have to wait 6 months for us to build them; we told them we can deliver them so many in 1 month, 2 months, or 15 days, but we want them to give us priority for replacement of the number we gave them. And in that way we keep them rolling all of the time, and they know we still have a half dozen tugs and an average of 20 barges under construction.

Mr. SMITH. Are you able to get sufficient engines for the tugs?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes.

Mr. SMITH. Are you having any difficulty along that line?

Mr. ALEXANDER. We give 6 months to 10 months advance notice.

Mr. SMITH. Have you been having any difficulty in the last 60 days in getting steel?

Mr. ALEXANDER. It takes a little more effort behind it, a little more coordination behind it. I have three on the yard now; two rolling.

Mr. SMITH. There is a delay in getting Diesel engines?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes; if we give 6 to 10 months notice we get them, and that is what we do. We order several, 10 or over, and at the end