

The CHAIRMAN. They have practically got a 35-foot channel complete to Montreal. It was 32½ early last summer, and they were still working on it.

Mr. RANKIN. You would not have any trouble with submarines across Florida; you could keep them out of there as easily as the Great Lakes; they could not go in there.

Now, we have a ridiculous situation. We have an Intracoastal Waterway of thousands of miles long, with just one little space in there that absolutely cuts it in two, and you cannot take those barges and go down the Atlantic coast into the Gulf of Mexico at all. It seems to me, from an economic standpoint, war or no war, that any man can say that this barge canal across Florida ought to be constructed at the earliest possible moment. Besides, the world does not live on oil all the time. There are a good many other things. You take all the trade with the Atlantic seaboard and Central America would now be going through this canal if it were finished.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I am not so sure that we are not approaching the time when the traffic that comes through the Panama Canal has got to have some outlet, because submarines will almost have closed the "Dragon's Mouth"—is that what you call it—and the windward passage and the Florida Straits so that traffic, which comes up the Panama Canal, has to come up through the Gulf of Mexico. The traffic from the west coast, if this war continues and the submarines continue to operate, in that windward passage, and what you call the "Dragon's Mouth" down next to the coast of South America only has an outlet through the Panama Canal, and it would ultimately be through this barge canal across Florida.

Mr. PITTENGER. May we hear the experts?

Mr. RANKIN. I thought you ought to have that information.

Mr. MILLER. I think perhaps it would be helpful to the committee at this point to place in the record some figures—and I desire to do so—in respect to the traffic upon our inland waterways, as tabulated in the report of the Chief of Engineers for the year 1940.

Mr. PITTENGER. From January to January?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. The calendar year.

Mr. MILLER. The grand total for the Mississippi River and its tributaries for the year 1940 was 112,634,317 tons.

The commerce on the canals and connecting channels of the United States, for the year 1940, was 218,447,623 tons.

The CHAIRMAN. Approximately one half of that was connecting channels on the Great Lakes I presume.

Mr. MILLER. I imagine so. The grand total of all inland waterway commerce in the United States for the year 1940, including rivers, canals, and connecting channels was 414,786,692 tons. Expressed in terms of ton-miles, it amounted to a total of 22,411,961,000 ton-miles.

I venture the prediction, that the tonnage carried on the Mississippi River and its tributaries for the year 1941, which was 112,000,000 tons for the year 1940, showed an increase of from 30 to 50 percent over the previous year.

Mr. CULKIN. And what is the probable capacity of those waterways as to tonnage? It is practically unlimited, is it not?