

Mr. ALEXANDER. I can speak for the intracoastal waterways of Louisiana and Texas and say that it has virtually reached its capacity in the 25,000,000 tons handled last year, because of the narrowed channel and the restricted depth. And, as you recall, based on the traffic of 2 or 3 years ago, which was probably not half—I am not sure—not half as much as it is now—the engineers at that time made a recommendation that the depth be increased to 12 feet and the bottom width to 225.

I would imagine on the Ohio River the traffic would be limited to some extent by the lock capacity, but, generally speaking, I think it is quite true that the commerce on the Mississippi, the Ohio, and other tributaries to the Mississippi could be greatly increased if we had more towboats and barges. I think that is self-evident.

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Miller, let me call attention to this fact at this time: We get our supply of bauxite—and I have gone into this with experts on aluminum and experts in that business—we get it from South America. We do not have enough high-grade bauxite to last for 2 years if that supply should be cut off. It cannot come around through the Atlantic any more until we overcome the submarines. It has been said it will take 15 months to build this canal, that is the first short stretch. They are working now to get an appropriation through the Senate, and have been working on it for a good many months, in order to get some plans for the processing of low-grade bauxite and clay. That is in the experimental stage yet. If the supply of bauxite in South America should be shut off in 2 years we would find ourselves without aluminum unless we had developed the process of extracting it from this low-grade bauxite and ordinary clay. And the only way you can get that bauxite out is on the railroads, or on the Mississippi River or on the canal. If this situation in the Atlantic continues it will present one of the most serious propositions that confronts our long-range war efforts.

Are you not using this South American bauxite in New York?

Mr. CULKIN. Yes.

Mr. RANKIN. All right.

Mr. CULKIN. But it is going to Canada.

Mr. RANKIN. It does not matter where it goes, as you still have to get it here from South America.

Mr. CULKIN. The railroads fought that movement.

Mr. RANKIN. I understand. The gentleman won't have any quarrel with me on that.

Mr. CULKIN. I understand that. But they fought that movement. The thing is beyond description.

Mr. RANKIN. But we do not want to compound the offense so as to render it impossible to get this project through.

Mr. JOHNS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RANKIN. Yes.

Mr. JOHNS. How do you get it from South America?

Mr. RANKIN. You have to go up through the Caribbean Sea.

Mr. JOHNS. Is not the submarine menace there?

Mr. RANKIN. Yes; but it is not as bad as on the Atlantic coast.

Mr. GREEN. Could it be brought by rail and truck?

Mr. RANKIN. Mr. Green suggested it might be brought up by truck, but that is rather farfetched.