

the man trying to make a living down there. I have no special interest. Every man realizes that it is part of his duty to do whatever he can to help better conditions anywhere in the United States; and that means any forward movement anywhere in the country, either water or rail transportation, or whatever it may be. In line with what Mr. Rankin said, if we cannot ship our raw materials, our oil, to the East, we may find it necessary to establish industries to use it down there.

I heard a very prominent engineer make this statement the other day in Texas: He said down there in Texas today we are bringing to Texas the finest young manhood of this country, educated and highly trained technicians, men with vision. Those men have seen the opportunities in Texas today, and when the war is over they are coming back, and Texas will have the benefit of their skill, their daring, their knowledge. The people in the East had better wake up, if they are opposed to this sort of thing. But I do not believe they are.

Mr. PITTENGER. Do you know the history of the omnibus river and harbor bill? Do you know that the matter you are talking about today was branded as pork; that bill was called a rotten bill.

Mr. BOWIE. Yes.

Mr. PITTENGER. Do you know that selfishness ran riot, that the welfare of the American people was submerged all the way through?

Mr. BOWIE. That is true; and it is hard for a man with any sensibility to view that situation without a sign of emotion.

We would not have lost so many ships or tankers on the Atlantic seaboard if we had had this waterway. Our tankers would have been going across the ocean thoroughly protected by convoys.

Mr. GREEN. That is still going on off the coast of Florida, with ships being lost and hundreds of men being murdered because of the lack of a channel to get the oil through Florida and eliminate that peril.

Mr. BOWIE. That is right.

I would like to go into a little of the history of what has taken place down here, which should be encouraging to the committee because it shows what a blessing those past efforts have been to one part of the country.

You can realize what it means to the protection of a country, 2,400 miles away from the major purchasing power, and this section is under a tremendous handicap on account of that situation, if it must ship all of its commodities by rail, when it is 2,400 miles from New York. The railroads cannot haul that grapefruit and those vegetables out of that section and haul the cars back again at the same price that they can haul by water out of Florida. That is physically impossible. That is what we were up against for many years until this committee decided to build a port at Port Isabel and at Brownsville.

I have seen thousands and thousands of acres of the finest vegetables plowed under; I have seen the finest fruits in the Rio Grande Valley plowed under for lack of a market. Do you know, friends, that this finest grapefruit for canning purposes has sold as low as \$3 a ton down in the Rio Grande Valley; \$3 a ton, less than bituminous coal at the mines in Ohio. The railroads knew that but they did not come to our relief. They are always talking about wanting to protect the tax-