

Long ago we learned how to make the most of whatever facilities we have at hand. We will deliver the goods if we are given a chance, and we will not argue about the materials we have to work with. The thing we resent is being told it cannot be done, when we know that we have the experience and the facilities to do this job. Do not forget that we have seen ships sunk and lives lost off our Florida coasts. We want those losses stopped.

In some northwest Florida ports there are now existent terminals, facilities for handling millions of gallons of oil and gasoline. It is being trucked, piped, or freighted out. By concentrating on these areas additional millions of gallons can be handled readily. But a new pipe line across the State, linking northwest Florida with the great terminal facilities at Jacksonville offers the greatest opportunity at the moment. Gasoline piped into Jacksonville can move swiftly into the traffic arteries of the eastern seaboard. It offers safe water transportation northward in the least possible time. It is convenient for rail or highway shipments, and it is highly important that pumping and storage facilities are already existent and ready for greater utilization.

A pipe line from the northwest Florida Gulf Coast to Jacksonville can move three to five million gallons of gasoline daily. It can be built from materials already located. We know definitely that there are new and used materials to be had. Evidence has been presented here that there are existing pipe lines which can be pulled up and moved, if this is desired. Sound engineering principles have even shown the feasibility of constructing a wood stave pipe line. Sheathed in wire, this type of pipe line is well adapted to use in the generally level terrain to be traversed in northern Florida. Lower pressures must be used in pumping, but that is overcome by installing pumps at more frequent intervals. So this job need not be held back by shortage of critical materials. We need the pipe line and the country needs its services. If new material cannot be spared for its construction, we will take an old pipe line and put it to work. Or we will even use a wooden line. All we want is the go-ahead signal.

Please remember that we are not making an all-out war effort until every available worker and every available piece of machinery is turning out material of war. Our waterway and port facilities were constructed at great cost. Let us use them. Let us use them to win this war—now. A pipe line joining these waterways to the eastern seaboard can be built in a few months. It is the shortest step to speeding up gasoline deliveries. Let us build it, and help stop sinkings off our Atlantic and Gulf coasts.

Mr. Chairman, the State of Florida is fully aware of the gravity of the situation and the extreme importance of the legislation now under consideration. For that reason a number of witnesses have come to Washington to testify.

First, I am glad to have the privilege of presenting to you the Honorable J. L. Sharit, mayor of the city of Port St. Joe, one of the towns mentioned prominently in connection with the proposed legislation.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will be glad to have a statement at this time from Mayor Sharit.