

one commodity to get up to the East. I do not think that we should lose sight of the fact that we have other commodities, particularly from other sections of the country, the southwest part of the country, in Louisiana especially, we have the greatest sulfur and salt mines in the world.

Mr. Alexander appeared here yesterday—

The CHAIRMAN. You think that this is very urgent?

Mr. HÉBERT. It is very urgent.

Mr. Alexander indicated yesterday the fact that this is not only a war or a defense effort; that it certainly is something that goes far beyond that.

Now, they say that the canal cannot be built to its fullest extent within a minimum of 15 months or a maximum of 3 years. I do not see how that enters into the picture at all. How many of us can say when this war is going to end? I do not know anyone who can say.

But, whether the war ends in 3 months or 15 months or 30 years, if we had prepared for this war, if we had been interested in these inland waterways, if we had been interested in these facts, it would not be necessary for any of us to appear before the committee today in the interest of such a proposal. It would have been there and the commodities would have been flowing.

So that I think it is a farsighted policy to develop this waterway no matter how long the estimates are for its completion.

You have heard a lot about the railroads. I think that it is time that we put the railroads on the water. Let us move the products. Certainly no man and no woman has any defense against the submarine. As the gentleman from Florida said, if a submarine can get into 8 or 12 feet of water, then God help us.

The thing that we have got to do is to get our commodities across, and the most feasible and sensible way I think at the present time is by the development of this particular canal. And certainly I would say that the public interest and the defense go hand in glove.

Mr. SMITH. How long will it take to complete the canal?

Mr. HÉBERT. I have heard estimates of from 15 months minimum to 3 years maximum.

Mr. SMITH. The Pennsylvania Turnpike was driven through 7 mountains 177 miles. They cut Saddleback Mountain out. They put in something like 50 bridges. That took less time than that.

Mr. HÉBERT. I appreciate that. But I am only talking about the figures.

What I want to bring out before you is that I do not think the time element is an element to be considered in this case at all. The thing that we have got to consider is that we want a canal and we want it built, and we do not care how long it takes. And as long as we are dilly-dallying and talking about it and wondering who is going to do it and who is not going to do it, and why it should be done, it is going to mean just more delay.

If this thing had been brought here before, we would not be arguing today. We would have a canal right now. We would be moving the commodities. We would not be worrying about shortages of gas and other commodities in the eastern part of the United States. The sooner we start this proposition, the better for the whole country.