

Mr. Chairman, I would like to request that statements of Mr. Sam Coker, of Yazoo City, Miss.; Mr. James A. Pierce, traffic manager, Mississippi Chemical Corp.; and Mr. W. S. Stuckey, manager, Cooperative Elevator Co., Greenwood, Miss., be included in the record at this point.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly urge the committee to authorize the Yazoo River navigation project as part of the Mississippi River and tributaries project.

(Statements referred to follow:)

STATEMENT OF SAM H. COKER

My name is Sam H. Coker, I live on a cotton farm eight miles north west of Yazoo City, Mississippi. I own and operate a farm implement store in Yazoo City, Mississippi. I am president of the Yazoo Mississippi Delta Levee Board, Domiciled in Clarksdale, Mississippi, which district includes ten counties in the Yazoo Mississippi Delta. I am, also, Chairman of the Yazoo County Port Commission, and I come before you to speak in behalf of the Yazoo River Navigation Project. The original improvement on the Yazoo River to provide a channel with an average width of about 200 feet and a minimum depth of 4 feet was completed in 1888 with a cost of approximately \$360,000.00. The Project is maintained as required by removal of snags, hanging trees and other obstructions. It extends from the mouth of the Yazoo River at Vicksburg to the vicinity of Greenwood. There has been transportation on the Yazoo River since before the Civil War reaching a low ebb at the advent of the new and deeper draft barges that are presently used in water transportation. The proposed waterway would serve an area with a population of approximately 360,000 whose economy is largely agriculture, even though there are some agriculture related industries together with paper and petroleum industries. The river at present carries from 100,000 to slightly in excess of 200,000 tons per year depending on the amount of water available.

In 1961 about a dozen men from the four principle counties through which the waterway would flow organized the Yazoo River Development Committee. This Committee engaged Professor Don Doty of Mississippi State University to make a complete survey of the area for proposed navigation benefits. This study was financed by local interest and submitted to the Corps of Engineers at their Hearings. The above mentioned study indicates that there would have been 611,000 tons moved on the Yazoo River if barge transportation had been available in the year 1962. It, also, indicates that by the year 2012 estimated tonnage would be 1,875,000 tons handled at a savings of \$1,500,000.00 per year. The latest study by the Corps of Engineers would indicate an increase of 991,000 tons by 1975 and 5½ million tons by the year 2025. Cotton has long been the number one crop grown in the area; however, acreage control on cotton during recent years and the adaptability of Delta soil to soybeans and small grains have resulted in significant increases in the production of these commodities. The principle benefit to the project is transportation savings which are approximately 3½ million dollars annually. In 1963 Yazoo County created a 5 man Port Commission to direct the development of port facilities in the county. With the assistance of the state of Mississippi the county at this time owns a modern well equipped port with facilities to handle both dry and liquid material. Among the many items that would move on the waterway some of the principle ones for outbound traffic would be soybeans, grain, petroleum products and fertilizer. Among the inbound traffic would be oyster shells, fertilizer, coal, and agricultural lime. In this connection I would like to call attention to the fact that from 1960 to 1966 there was over 290,000 acres of land cleared in the area and brought into production.

This figure has been increased from 1966 to date by approximately 33,000 acres. In Yazoo County alone, which is the largest county in the state of Mississippi by area, there were over 42,000 acres cleared in this five year period, and at least 6,000 acres brought in in the last two years, and virtually all of this new land has gone into soybean production. The best market for these soybeans is the export market at the ports of New Orleans and Mobile, which will be shown by another witness. The inbound tonnage would be tremendously increased by the anticipated use of the large volume of coal with which to operate International Paper Company plant at Redwood, Mississippi and the Greenwood Municipal