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A Rock Road in the Everglades near Davie, Florida

LOOKING AHEAD

Views on Everglade Topics

—BY—

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THIS great Everglade drainage project, which has occupied the minds of many loyal citizens for a long period of years, has at last reached the stage where it no longer needs to be defended against those who, mainly for personal reasons, desired its failure. It has weathered storms of all descriptions and now merely awaits the gradual detailed development that will require, no doubt, several years of experiment and pioneering.

Like the great desert of the West,

it will gradually dwindle in size, means of transportation will develop and in time crossing it will be little more than a pleasant afternoon's automobile ride. The city limits of Miami now extend to what only a few years ago was an impenetrable jungle. The county commissioners are now arranging for an automobile road twelve miles in length along the banks of the Miami Canal into the very heart of what was once a formidable saw-grass morass. Although this has been an unusually dry season and



SUGAR CANE ON 'GLADE LAND
Near Davie, Florida

"Few people realize the great productive capabilities of this large region"

the dangers of flooding are not surely over, one can kick the dust where boats once sailed and complaints of overdrainage are heard from many farmers whose lands on the edges of the 'Glades will inevitably suffer from the lowering of the water table.

Now that the big question of drainage is off our minds, there come countless little questions which each man or group of men must settle in their own way and to their own satisfaction. What to grow, how to grow it and where to sell it, are the same old questions which have to be gradually worked over and solved in every agricultural region. The facts that the Everglades can be drained and that the soil is fertile when drainage is complete are no longer denied by anybody at all familiar with the region and the principles of agriculture in general.

Senate Document No. 89, on the Everglades of Florida is a classic document and will be used no doubt in years to come as a sort of text book on Everglades development. I believe

this book was prepared mainly through the efforts of Senator Fletcher and I am glad to say that the recent primary gave him such a good majority that he will have ample chance to continue his good work along the line of reclamation, conservation, rural credits, etc., for the development of this great southern section of the state.

The report of the distinguished engineers recently employed to pass on this great project has been printed also as a Senate document. This last Senate document brings the subject to date. These two documents should be in the library of every Floridian since they answer authoritatively almost every question pertaining to Everglade hydraulics.

Few people realize the great productive capabilities of this large, practically frost-free region. Few people realize that Florida is the second largest state east of the Mississippi. Few realize that in 1910 the population per square mile was only 13.7. Porto Rico has a population of

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310 to the square mile. Even Cuba, with its large area and many troubles, has a population of 49 per square mile. In South Florida there are just a few people living on the very edge of a great big territory, in a delightful climate, capable of yielding an amount of agricultural produce far beyond our most extravagant predictions.

The Everglades proper, that is, the territory of deep muck and sawgrass, is not so extensive as the old maps would have us believe. Almost the whole of Lee County is pineland and prairie. Large stretches of territory on the east of the pineland in Lee County are prairie, much of which has been used for some time for pasturage. There are, of course, muck sloughs here and there and hammock lands and cypress swamps—such as the Big Cypress—but the main body of saw-grass muck land is in the eastern section of the state in Dade and Palm Beach counties.

The territory marked Everglades on the map usually extends away south to the Big Mangrove swamp,

to Long Key and Harney and Shark rivers. If, however, one were to travel due west from Miami toward Chocloskee he would pass many fertile hammock islands and, with few exceptions, would find rock very close to the surface. In fact I have talked with several who have crossed the Everglades in this direction and in very few places did they fail to touch rock with their push-poles. Throughout the whole of this territory lying south of a line due west of Miami the rock is close to the surface and is soft and porous. Before any canals were cut to the east coast the natural flow of water in the Everglades was south and southwest toward Shark river and Harney's Creek. The opening of deep channels to the east coast will divert this water to the eastward and the lowering of the water table in the Everglades will, no doubt, drain vast areas of this rocky land in the southern section.

The great success of grapefruit in the Redlands section is due to the porousness of the rock and the fact



A CHANNEL OF COMMERCE
The Canal and Boats at Davie, Florida



A Lateral Canal, Showing Depth of Muck Soil.

that moisture is near the surface, especially the latter. The lowering of the water table in the 'Glades will render available a vast area of very valuable fruit land in this southern section, while the rich muck lands to the north will be extremely productive in vegetables, rice, sugar, bananas, forage crops, etc. I look to the southern section for the great citrus fruit development of the future.

Just as soon as the water is sufficiently lowered we should lose no time in building a road due west from Miami across this region to the west coast. According to many reports, Chocoloskee Bay on the west coast has a great future. A city will in time develop there and we will have nothing to lose, but much to gain by connecting ourselves with it by road at the earliest possible moment. It is only 72 miles west of Miami.

Lee County will, no doubt, do its share—whatever that may be. The

State ought to help. It will open up to settlement a wonderful back-country and the trip across and back would be but a pleasant day's ride in an automobile. The west coast and east coast have been separated too long. Although near to us—as the crow flies—they are days away in fact—as far away in time and discomfort as New York.

There should be no rivalry or jealousy between the two regions. We should develop together as Tropical Florida. Our interests are common; what helps one will help the other. The sooner we are united for the future development of South Florida, the better it will be for both. The best kind of a bond is a fine roadway.

It is worthy of note that Fort Meyers, the metropolis of that section, is just as far from the Chocoloskee region as is Miami. If there is a highway across the state from Chocoloskee it would be just as easy for

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the people of the southermost sections of Lee County and those inhabiting the mainland sections of Monroe County to come to Miami to trade as it would be to go to Fort Myers.

There is rock all the way. There is a good hard bottom to build on and material can be quarried here and there along the whole route. Leading out from this main highway there will be many smaller branch roads. It will develop the great interior of the state. So far, this great cheese has been merely nibbled around the edges. The time is now ripe for penetration into the heart of this great tropical southland—the spot where endless quantities of the very choicest tropical fruits can and will be produced.

It will be a great tourist route—the first Ocean-to-Gulf highway. If all our organizations get together and work for this one thing and stick to it, it will come sooner or later, and

bring with it more than we at present realize. Think of bathing in the Atlantic Ocean in the morning, and in the Gulf of Mexico in the afternoon of the same day—and every day of the year, as far as the weather and temperature of the water are concerned!

Travelers crossing the 'Glades from the west have described how, on climbing a small tree on one of the 'Glade islands, they could see, with the help of a glass, the high woods on both sides.

A road straight across would not prove such a terrific job and would do lots more good than the proposed road to Cape Sable. Lee County, with its great quantity of shells, would soon connect this road with Fort Meyers along the Gulf. Much of it has been built already. Now that the Everglade drainage problem is past all danger of failure, it is time to link the East coast with the West coast



A Modern Ditcher in the 'Glades

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I would like to move and hope every Board of Trade and other organizations in South Florida will second the motion, that 20th Street and the Orange Glade road be continued (Orange Glade Road is a fine name for this highway) due west and kept going until it hits Chocoloskee on the Gulf. This would hit part of Monroe County, which so far in that section has no roads and no population. Perhaps the three counties could be united on this project.

Anyway, they say Chocoloskee is a great clam country and perhaps a trip across to a clam bake in an afternoon may some day be common! Now the journey by boat and rail, or all boat, is a tedious trip consuming the better part of at least three days.

It seems to the writer that a road across this state to the Gulf would do more good than a road along the canal to Okeechobee. The canal affords ample transportation northward, while directly to the westward the land is devoid of all means of access, except by foot.



Glade Land Near Okeechobee

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