

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas talks about damages caused by the Army Corps of Engineers and Big Sugar*

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: Because, the thing that we've got to do is to restore the water, from the canal, to the Kissimmee River. Arthur Marshall, our great environmentalist, some years ago flew over the Kissimmee Valley and to his astonishment, he saw that the Kissimmee River Basin, I mean the Kissimmee River course, dried up as it was, was still there. That the water was in the canal. That all we have to do is get the water from the canal back into the meandering river. Now whether that should be done by completely stopping up the canal or by partial plugging. I, myself, think partial plugging would do very nicely. And they could still control flooding they get at rare intervals, very well. I don't care how they do it so long as they do it. And we, Arthur Marshall and John Jones of the Florida Wildlife Federation and I, went to the Legislature, back in about '77 and got a resolution through the Legislature, to tell the Congress, "Tell the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to restore the water," to make studies to store that's where I began, by telling you that the engineers were told, then, to study the restoration of the Kissimmee Valley and they've been using that money ever since, but evidently not doing very much in the way of studies. So, that when the engineers got a hold of the thing, there's no controlling it, because it's the Army, you know. It's the Department of Defense they call it now. They think the war is on, here in Florida, I guess, (*laughter*). Cause they've been able to do anything, almost anything they wanted to do. And, certainly they, I keep coming back to the Water Management District, they certainly have not disagreed with the US Army Corps of Engineers. So we've had these two bodies, these two official bodies, with a great deal of old thinking going on, on our necks, you might say. And I'm delighted that the Water Management District is seeing a great light, but it will be probably necessary to go to the Legislature and get the Legislature to approach the proper committee in Congress to get the US Army Corps of Engineers out of Florida, or as much out of Florida so that the State of Florida can restore the Kissimmee River. Then we've got to tell the people that we've got to get some meanders full of water again and the water coming down Lake Okeechobee, then we've got to tell the people with the dairy farms and all that to clean up their own act. There's no reason at all why they should let all that perfectly good manure go out into our drinking water. It's valuable. They could put in polishing ponds. They could use a great deal of it for fertilizer. They can use it for methane gas. They could use it for all kinds of things. Really, you have to be forced to make money, it's really funny. The

same way we've got to get rid of the sugar people. Having the sugar people in Florida is complete nonsense. As I was saying, in the West Indies it's raised to a much greater advantage. They let it grow to about two years, because the longer it grows, of course, the more sugar there is per cane. They generally grind, harvest, iron-grind in the West Indies about two years, it could grow to four years, but two years is commercially feasible. But up here, you see, around the Lake you have freezes, and frosts are the great enemy of the sugar cane, so they've begun harvesting at eight months to a year, so they don't get the sugar content. So they depreciate the soil. They don't get the sugar content. Up to the last two or three years without a sugar subsidy, costing us more for our sugar, because it's so expensive for them, you know. The whole thing is stupid! Why should we pay them to depreciate our property? I can't understand. So, the quicker we get rid of the sugar people, the better, as far as I'm concerned. They should go at any time, now, as far as I'm concerned, (*audience laughter*). Pick up and go. Any minute. We won't miss them a bit.