

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas discusses the dangers of Melaleuca and closing statements*

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: So we are in the process of doing all these things, now, to correct some of the stupidities that people have done with our native plant and animal population and the water supply.

The latest thing in our description of all the horrors that are going on, is that we have this tree, the melaleuca, that I said was coming into the Everglades National Park. It's coming into the Big Cypress like mad. It's the worst of those three trees, because so far, they hardly know anything that can kill it. You can cut it down and it comes up from the roots and the trunk. You can burn it and the seeds are shed around the, beyond the area of the fire so you get a lot more melaleuca coming up. They tell me, now, you can cut the individual trees, I don't know what they're called, poisoned axes or something, (asking someone off camera), you said, what's the name of it? Some kind of a hatchet that will poison them so they won't grow up again, but that means every single tree has to be cut, they're coming in so thickly, that there are forests of melaleuca. If you go from here, well, if we'd been watching today coming up, you watch all the way to Palm Beach from Miami, you see melaleucas coming up, like everything. Now, high water does affect it. So, that in the Everglades, it's not so much a menace, but there's not high water in the Big Cypress and we can't flood it so we've got to find out how else we can get at it or the Big Cypress is going to go. And nothing can live when the tree comes in so thickly. You couldn't get through it. I don't think a panther could get through it. It would be... it's a real problem.

Well, anyway, I've told enough bad things to keep you busy for a long time, but be prepared to hear that I'm going to be hanged for shooting all the Fish and Wildlife people, up in Tallahassee, if they don't do right by that panther committee. The point is this, if enough people get aroused, to write to the governor and the cabinet or to their legislatures, we will be able to get action, because there is no strength in the world like the strength of public opinion. That is what we have to get, why we have to, why I have to go around telling people all about this, so that we will have enough informed and powerful public opinion to help us. It is the only safety in the long run. Thank you very much.