

There are in the Everglades four million acres of land. It will be worth at least one hundred dollars per acre when it is drained, but it is worth nothing in an undrained state. The state of Florida owns a million and a half acres of this land. The value of the land, when it is drained, will be one hundred and fifty million dollars. There are in the Everglades future homes, allowing five to each family, for more than one hundred million people, and economists have said that the economic worth of each individual to the community and the state is more than two thousand dollars. The development and settlement of these lands, the making of fertile fields from trackless marsh, will add hundreds of millions of dollars to the taxable valuations of the state, thus reducing taxes throughout the state and giving the state more money to be used for improvements. The annual value of the products of these lands when drained will be beyond any calculation we can possibly make now. It is not possible to estimate in terms of dollars and cents the value to the state of progressive citizens beyond the economic value. It is thus seen that the material worth to the state of Florida and her people, of the Everglades when drained, runs into the billions of dollars. But great as the factor of material worth is, there are larger things at stake than that. The faith and credit and reputation of this state, her fair name and that of all her people are involved and pledged in this great reclamation project.

The land owned by the state was received from the government of the United States upon the condition that the land and its proceeds be used for drainage and reclamation purposes. There is some question whether this constitutes a legally binding contract between the government and the state, but there is no question but that it constitutes a moral obligation of the deepest and highest sort. The people of the state, in the election of 1904, committed themselves and the state to the project and in that election endorsed the idea of drainage, even if every acre of land owned by the state within the district, should be required to do the work.

Their endorsement of the project was approved and ratified by the State Administration and by the State Legislature. Word went out to all the world that the people of the State of Florida had declared themselves in favor of the drainage of the Everglades and that this great work was being undertaken by their servants at their direction. Land in the Everglades was sold by the state to wholesalers of land and by these wholesalers to more than twenty thousand individual purchasers. It could not have been sold except for the fact that drainage was a state project; that the great state of Florida, herself was behind it; that her faith and her credit were pledged to its completion. These individual purchasers were shown letters and extracts from speeches by the administration officers of the state, to the effect that Florida herself was pledged to the drainage of the Everglades. They were shown acts of the legislature and messages to the legislature of three governors and in all of these there was to be found a distinct pledge involving the highest and most binding of moral obligations; the faith of the people of a great state binding that state and her people to push this project to an early and successful completion. There was never any thought in the minds of the people of this state or of any other state except that the state of Florida was behind it with her great power and with the vast acreage of land which she herself owned. The idea that the State lands were in honor bound and pledged was never doubted until the control of the Everglades drainage passed from the dead hand of Florida's greatest son into the hands of a coterie of self-seeking peanut politicians.

In 1906, carrying out his pledge to the people and the pledge of his people to the world, Governor Broward began drainage. There was available \$160,000 in money and two or three million acres of submerged land but Governor Broward had the genius to conceive the plan, the mind to plan its details and the courage to put the great plan into action. Within less than three years, starting with \$160,000, he accomplished more in the way of real results than his

successors have since accomplished with more than three millions of money expended. Within a few months after he began drainage a large acreage of land was un-watered and dry and settlers and home-seekers followed the dredges, making their homes in the fertile body of land from which the water was thus removed. The absolute demonstration of the feasibility of drainage which Governor Broward gave to the world within a short time established a confidence and belief in the fertility of the soil and the feasibility of the plan which has served to keep the work going through subsequent years of mismanagement. As John L. Healy put it, "Governor Broward placed the Everglades upon the map of Florida and the Everglades placed Florida upon the map of the United States.

Governor Broward, even after the expiration of his term as governor, exercised a large influence upon drainage operation. His plan and policy may be stated under three heads:

- 1st. That the State of Florida should use its land within the Everglades district, or so much thereof as might be necessary, in order to effect the drainage of this vast body of fertile land.
- 2nd. That the land should not be drained all at once, but that some should be drained immediately, and other land as needed. He did not call it "unit drainage" but the same plan has been since proposed by some of the greatest engineers in this country under that name.
- 3rd. His plan was that immediate results must be obtained. Some land must be drained without delay in order that the fertility of the land and the feasibility of drainage might be shown to a doubtful world, and that people might understand that the State of Florida was behind the drainage and was actually draining the Everglades.

On October 1st, 1910 Governor Broward died. He is sleeping now in Evergreen Cemetery at Jacksonville. Although in his lifetime he had met fierce and bitter opposition, in death men realized that he was Florida's greatest son and his name is now her tenderest memory. This great man had not been dead for many days before the details of his great plan were changed. His unit method of drainage was abandoned. His idea that immediate results must be obtained were

forgotten and that process of changing plans, abandoning details and carelessness of the honor and good name of the State was begun, which has hindered the project, brought it to its present danger of complete collapse and placed a stigma and a stain upon the credit, the reputation and the honor of the state he loved so well and for which he worked until death. The mismanagement of the Everglades project which has brought the whole plan to its present deplorable state has all occurred since Governor Broward died.