

All the mismanagement of this project, then, has occurred within the past five years, or a little more. In order to make perfectly clear in what the mismanagement has consisted, I shall sub-divide it, numbering each of the heads under which the mismanagement naturally falls:

1. There was the abandonment of the unit plan of drainage,- The Trustees conceiving the Everglades to be all one project, and that it should be drained all at once, or not at all. The result of this has been that even the land already drained has since been submerged, and that, after ten years of drainage operations, there is not an acre of land within the body of the district wholly drained. The people of this state, as well as all others, purchasers of the land, and all who have watched the progress of the work have, for that reason, become discouraged and disgusted. On this account there have been prosecutions; men have been placed in jeopardy, of their very liberty. Thousands of small purchasers have allowed the lands to go back to the State for taxes,-losing that part of their savings which they had invested.
2. There has been a yielding to political influences, and the weighing of personal political advantage upon the part of the Trustees. It has not been treated as a great reclamation project, but as a political plaything. Dredges have been placed, not where they would drain the most land, but where they would get the most votes. Responding to supposed political wisdom the Trustees, in February, 1913, passed a resolution to the effect that the State lands should not be longer considered pledged to the drainage of the Everglades. These things have not proven bad politics, simply for the reason that they have not been made clear to the people of Florida, who are jealous of the reputation and the honor of their state.
3. The work has not been concentrated; the dredges have been placed here and there, as political expediency seemed to dictate, with the result that nothing has been drained, except a narrow fringe of land on the shores of Lake Okechobee.
4. By a change of direction in which the dredges were operating, the waters of Lake Okechobee, to the amount of hundreds of billions of cubic feet, were turned loose upon the lower Everglades, which were already under water. The ridiculous fact has been that the State works have irrigated large portions of the Glades instead of draining them, and it is the consensus of opinion that they are not now very much in need of irrigation.
5. There has been no adequate financial plan proposed. The Legislature has passed, as patriotic Floridians, every Act for which the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund have asked; and before passing them, were assured by the Trustees in official communications and in personal conversations, that all financial arrangements had been made, and that the final success of these arrangements was dependent merely upon legislative action. In every instance they got the legislation for which they asked, and in no instance have they perfected the arrangements which they claimed to have already made.
6. They have told us they were selling bonds. That absolutely is not true. They are giving notes, payable one year after date, with these bonds as collateral. These notes are binding obligations upon the very land they claim they are saving, and the inevitable outcome, unless a change of plan is made, will be that the very lands they claim to be saving to the people of the state will be sacrificed for a song in order to pay these notes. The faith and credit of the State have not only been affected by failure to redeem sacred pledges, but by failure to meet financial obligations. Hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of notes of the Trustees are held by

banks and by contractors, and there is no way in sight of paying them.

7. There has been absolute inattention and neglect upon the part of most of the Trustees. They are not acting as individuals, but as servants and Trustees of the people, charged with a sacred trust, -- having placed upon them a solemn obligation. The potential financial value of the things involved in this trust runs into the hundreds of millions of dollars, yet at least three of the Trustees have not been in the Everglades for periods of more than two years at a time. If they were Trustees for private individuals in matters involving as many thousands of dollars as the Everglades involves millions, they would have long ago been removed as Trustees by any court in the land. They would not treat their own private business with the same neglect and inattention they have treated the Everglades if there were as many hundreds of dollars involved as there are millions of dollars involved in the Everglades.
8. Although already busy men, having all the cares of State upon them, and their office at the State Capital 500 miles away, they have not in any effective manner delegated any of their powers, but have preferred to keep their grasping hands upon this project in order to reap whatever political advantage they could. I think it only fair to say, that the present Attorney General, of the State, and the present Commissioner of Agriculture have manifested a disposition to do the right thing, and the fair thing. They are, however, in a minority upon the Board.

The effects of the mismanagement of this project have been of a two-fold character. It has brought the Everglades drainage project to a most precarious condition. Unless some relief is had there is not money enough in sight, nor any probability of money enough being in sight to carry on the work; but, as a matter of fact, unless a change of plan is made, some definite policy decided upon and followed up, the confidence of the people in the Everglades re-established, and a willingness to live up to pledges made manifest, the whole project must

completely collapse during the term of the next governor.

FOUR WAYS IN WHICH THE REST OF THE STATE IS AFFECTED.

There are four ways in which the proper and efficient prosecution of the drainage work in the Everglades would be of immense value to the people in other parts of the State not in or near the Everglades:

1. The lands in the Everglades which the State owns would have a real value and would be salable. They have practically no value now, and are not readily salable, and the outlook for the immediate future is: that they will become less and less attractive to purchasers so long as the present plan of drainage is pursued. By way of proving this statement, in 1910 the State sold 50,000 acres of the land to E. C. Chambers for \$750,000.00. They have had to take a great deal of it back, but the fact remains that the sale was made. In 1915, there were 250,000 acres offered for sale for \$450,000.00 and there were no buyers. That means that the land now is not worth as much as one-eighth (1/8) of its value five years ago. So that the saving of the lands of which the Trustees boast is absolutely no saving at all, but very much to the contrary. Efficient drainage will add real value to these lands which will continually increase, instead of continually decreasing.
2. Efficient drainage will go far towards re-establishing the faith of the people of other States in Florida lands; will create a demand for them, and that demand will increase prices and values of all Florida lands, whether located in or near the Everglades or not. Before Governor Broward instituted drainage operations, wild land in large tracts without the timber on it, could be bought anywhere in Florida for \$2.00 an acre or less. Five years later, the price of it in large tracts had advanced to as much as \$10.00 per acre, and usually was considerably more than that. The same thing applies to improved properties in counties of the State not directly connected with the Everglades. Since 1910, on account of unfavorable publicity resulting from the mismanagement of the Everglades project, there has been in many cases an

actual decrease in land values and in many places failure of prices to increase. It is safe to say, that the average loss has been \$10.00 per acre all over Florida, which means a total of \$380,000,000. A wise policy as to drainage and efficient management will retrieve those losses and add other profits to them.

3. In 1910, as a result of Everglades drainage, and the widespread advertising of all Florida through Governor Broward's constructive reclamation policy, there was in practically every County in Florida, some colonization proposition going on; new people were coming in and bringing in new money to place in Florida banks; buying supplies and merchandise from stores, and lumber from Florida saw-mills, employing labor, clearing lands, adding to the wealth of the State and to all the counties in it; paying taxes, thereby reducing the necessity for those of us who were already here to pay large taxes. As a result of Everglades mismanagement and the unfavorable publicity which followed, that source of wealth has been cut off. It is no exaggeration to say, that at least 200,000 people have been prevented from coming to Florida in the last five years on that account. Economists place the value of each individual to the community at \$2,000. That makes a total loss from this cause to the State of \$400,000,000, not counting probable losses from the same causes in the future unless an efficient plan of drainage is adopted and carried out.

4. There are 20,000 acres of land in Florida which require drainage before they can be used for agriculture. There are many drainage districts now organized, or in process of organization throughout the State. If bonds could be readily sold there would be very many more. But on account of the mismanagement of the Everglades project and on account of the stain upon the reputation of the State and upon its credit, which this mismanagement has brought about, it is not possible to sell these bonds to advantage. So long as the stigma attaches to the Everglades drainage project, it will be very difficult to sell any Florida Drainage bonds. If you doubt this statement, you have only to ask your banker. If efficient Everglades drainage is effected, the stain upon the

credit and the reputation of the State of Florida and upon all Florida drainage bonds will be removed. And it will then be possible to sell Florida Drainage Bonds in the financial markets of the Country for higher prices. So that the mismanagement of Everglades matters for the past five years is not only of such a character that if persisted in it will cause the project to collapse, and the Everglades to remain indrained, but is also of such a character that, until the project is redressed by efficient management it will prevent the development of similar propositions all over the State.

The present system of handling Everglades drainage as a play-thing of "peanut Politicians" has already cost the State and its citizens, land owners and tax payers hundreds of millions of dollars, and, if continued, will cost hundreds of millions more in the future. It has injured the fair name of the State and of its people in the minds of the people of other states; it has prevented other drainage operations in Florida and will continue to prevent them until something effective is done in the Everglades; and all of this has been done upon the specious plea that these "peanut politicians" were saving to the State a million and a half acres of land, and, after all, they have caused all these deplorable losses.

Of course, it is easy to criticize and to find fault with the records and acts of public officials. It is not so easy to do constructive work as destructive. I have always believed, and now believe, that it is futile and useless to criticize and find fault unless one is in position to offer a constructive, concrete plan to take the place of the work which it is sought to have discarded. I have found fault with the plans of the present Board of Trustees with regard to the drainage of the Everglades. I have a substitute plan to offer. There are some changes which time and experience have made necessary, but in all its essentials the plan I offer can be well expressed by the words "Back to Broward". In order that there may be no misunderstanding of what that plan means, I set it down here in detail.

1. If elected Governor, thus becoming chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, I shall vote, and work, and fight to have all the lands owned by the State of Florida within the Everglades Drainage District placed behind the project, either as pledge for the payment of the bonds, or by sales of the land, as may from time to time seem most advisable, so far as the lands may be necessary to drainage. I want to save land to the people of the State, but the land I save will be drained land, and will have a real value. Before any of it is saved I intend to do all that is within my power to see that the credit, and the faith, and the reputation, and the honor of the State of Florida and her people are redeemed.
2. I shall vote, work and fight for the adoption of a plan which will insure adequate financial arrangements for the drainage of this land. My present idea is that that must be in the form of bonds, backed by taxes on lands within the Everglades Drainage District, and also backed by all the lands the State owns within that District. No tax ought to be levied except upon land within the District.
3. I shall vote, and work, and fight for the appointment of a Drainage Board which shall contain the best engineering, business, and administrative talent obtainable.
4. The main drainage office ought to be located on the ground, at the most convenient and accessible place for directing the work. As it is now, the State is endeavoring to handle a \$400,000,000 project from an office located 500 miles away -- two days distant in point of time. Such a method of operation would not be employed for a day in any private business of such magnitude.
5. I shall work, vote, and fight, as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, for the adoption of the unit plan of drainage. It is foolish and useless to attempt to drain the Everglades as a whole. It is impossible, in the first place, and in the second place even if it were

possible it is not desirable.

6. I shall, if it is within my power, see that some of the land in the Everglades -- as large a tract as possible -- is drained and reclaimed completely, and at once. This is utterly necessary in order that public confidence in Florida and elsewhere shall be re-established and the effect of all the unfavorable publicity which Florida has received on account of mismanagement of Everglades affairs counteracted so far as that be possible. Besides that, 10,000, or 20,000, or 30,000 acres, or as much more as can be drained immediately, when settled and cultivated by the thousands of homeseekers, who are now ready, willing and anxious to go upon the land, will be of far more value to the people of the State than all the millions of acres of undrained land which are now in the Glades.
7. I shall endeavor first, to drain the lands which have been sold to small purchasers, redeeming the credit and reputation and the honor of the State so far as that is within my power, and showing to the world that the people of Florida are jealous of Florida's honor, and bound by Florida's promises.
8. I will endeavor to secure for the State, through court action, or in whatever way may be necessary, both for use in advancing this project, and for other uses which may later develop, all the lands which have heretofore been illegally granted in violation of the contract with the Government, and in violation of the trust upon which the State officials hold this land.
9. I will do all that lies within my power to save for the State, all the land that I can, but I say to you frankly, here and now, that the land I save will be drained land -- not submerged land, and that it will have some real value, and that I will not endeavor to save an acre of Everglades land until the Everglades are drained. I shall take the aggressive upon this issue, because I consider it to be by far the most important issue now before the people of the State. It is most important, both in a financial and a material way, but beyond and above that, comes the honor and credit, and reputation, and the fair name of the State ~~in~~ in which we live, and all of her people are inextricably

bound up with it. I promise you now, that I shall carry this fight into every county in Florida, and that I shall try to show to the people of other counties, how their most precious heritage, the honorable record which was left to them by their fathers, has been used as a plaything, and a football by selfish "peanut politicians" in order that they might advance what they supposed to be their personal, political advantage. I am ready to meet them upon the stump, or in the press; and before this campaign shall have concluded, there will not be any candidate for Governor who will not have expressed himself openly before the people with a definite plan, and made definite pledges. It is not of great importance to me, personally, that I shall be elected. Financially, I would be considerably better off without the office. Of course I should like to be Governor of Florida. I consider that a laudable ambition; but if, either in victory or defeat, I can do anything to save to the people of this State the priceless financial heritage, I shall be glad; but beyond and above that, if I am, in any humble mind, the means of helping, in any small degree, by making this fight openly, and carrying it into all of Florida, of ~~it~~ redeeming, in the minds of the people of other states, the honor of the state of my birth from the stain and the stigma which these men have placed upon it, I shall consider that I have done as much for Florida as lies within my power; and in defeat or in victory I shall have ~~the~~^a memory which will be to me beyond all price.