

~~EVERGLADES MATTER~~

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. <sup>practically</sup> They have <sup>no</sup> value now and are <sup>readily</sup> not 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 60,000 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 230,000 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,

*Let advances to as much as*  
the price of it in large tracts was ~~nowhere less than~~ \$10.00 per acre, and usually was considerably more than that. The same thing applies to improved properties *not directly connected with the Everglades* in counties in the State. 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 these losses and add other profits to them. *and the widespread advertising of all Florida thru Governor Brown's constructive reclamation policy.*

3. In 1910, as a result of Everglades drainage ~~which had up until that time been efficiently conducted~~, there was in practically every County in Florida some colonization proposition going on; new people were coming in bringing in new money to place in Florida Banks; buying supplies and merchandise from stores and lumber from Florida Sawmills, employing labor, clearing lands, adding to the *wealth* ~~worth~~ 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 out 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 \$2,000.00. That makes a total loss from this cause to the State of \$400,000,000.00 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 <sup>20,</sup>~~19,~~000,000 acres of land in Florida which

require drainage before they can be used for agriculture. These  
are many drainage districts now organized or in process of organiza-  
tion throughout the State; if bonds could be <sup>readily</sup> sold there would be  
very many more. But on account of the mismanagement of the Ever-  
glades 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, <sup>to advantage.</sup> So long as the stigma at-  
taches to the Everglades drainage project, it will ~~not~~ <sup>be very difficult</sup> be possible 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 ~~any~~ 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 pro-  
ject to collapse, and the Everglades to remain undrained, but, is also  
of such a character that until the project is remedied by efficient  
management it will prevent development of similar propositions all  
over the State.

The present system of handling Everglades drainage as a  
play-thing of "Pea-nut Politicians" has already cost the State and  
its citizens, land owners and tax payers hundreds of millions of  
dollars, <sup>if continued</sup> and 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 some-  
thing effective is done in the Everglades; and all of this has been

done upon the specious plea that these "pea-nut politicians" were  
saving to the State a million and a-half <sup>acres</sup> of land, and after all  
~~these years~~ they have not effected any saving at all. *Caused all*  
*these deplorable losses.* -