

509-10-11 Burdine
Building.

Miami, Florida,

January 15, 1916.

Honorable I. L. Farris,
Suite 503 Bisbee Building,
Jacksonville, Florida.

Dear Judge Farris:

I wrote you some time ago about the Everglades situation. I think, if possible, it would be decidedly worth your while to come down here for a stay of two or three days within the next week. A good many of these people are rather disgusted with the way the Everglades matters are being handled by the candidates.

Of course, to be perfectly frank, Senator Hudson of Miami is the logical man to make that fight. If he does not, there are many here who would like to find someone else to make it.

So far as I am personally concerned, I can say to you frankly that the general attitude of the candidates towards the Everglades is going to control my position regardless of personal wishes in the matter, and also regardless of my friendship for certain of the candidates. I have said that to Senator Hudson and have written it to Mr. Knott and now say it to you. I regard that as by far the most important question with which the next Governor of Florida will have to deal; not only is it the most important for this section,

but, for the whole State. Its importance is greater now than it was in 1904, because now, the credit and the responsibility of the State of Florida and her people are behind it, at least in the minds of the people of other states.

Unless, more attention is given by the state authorities and unless the whole project is handled with more intelligence than has been used for the past few years, the whole project must necessarily fail and completely collapse during the term of the next Governor.

I think, if you consult any well informed real-estate man, he will tell you that the average loss in value on account of failure to complete this project has been not less than ten (\$10.00) dollars per acre on all Florida lands wherever located. I shall not attempt to make a definite calculation as to the loss the State has suffered by having prospective settlers turned away by undesirable publicity.

Economists have estimated the value of each individual to a community as approximately two thousand (\$2,000.00) dollars. There have been twenty thousand (20,000) purchasers of Everglades land, not to mention those who have purchased other Florida lands, who have failed to come for the reasons I have given. You can make your own estimate as to the total number prevented from coming to the State, and your own calculations as to the total losses suffered by the State for the reasons mentioned. You can, also make your own estimate

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as to the probable future effect unless something effective is done.

The Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund tell us that they are saving to the State one and one-half million acres of land. One-third of that land at the market price prevailing five years ago was worth considerably more than all of it is at present market price, so that the saving has not been very great. Unless some change is made it is inevitable that the market price five years from now will be a mere fraction of its present value.

I may say too, that it is undoubtedly true that if the project is ever once abandoned, it will be fifty years before it is taken up again, if it ever is.

You may see, from what I have said why I consider this by long odds the most important question before the people of the State. If you recall that I have always believed that the proper method of settling any public question is to discuss it fully in the open, before the people, you will understand why I am anxious to have someone make a hard campaign for Governor upon this broad issue.

Yours very truly,

JMC/reb.