

H. W. WEBSTER  
Sept 16, 1922.

Captain J. F. Jaudon.  
Fort Myers,  
Fla.

Dear Sir:-

Referring to the sketch of proposed entry of a Railway into Fort Myers as made by Mr Hartley, and after a careful preliminary examination of the area itself, extending my investigations to possible extension to Arcadia on the North and also Naples on the South, and extending thence to Miami, I beg to report:-

Fort Myers Connections and Terminals

Connection with the A.C.E.Ry. should be made at the intersection of Evans and Lafayette Streets. This, as I have outlined it, would necessitate the acquisition of the East half of the Southeast Quarter of Section twenty four (24) T.44 S. R.24 E., also the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest quarter and the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter, and a small portion of the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter, all in Section Nineteen T.44S. R.25 E., totaling about one hundred sixty one acres. This acreage will be an asset, rather than a liability as any part not necessary for tracks and railway yards can be utilized for warehouse lots and subdivision purposes. This will no doubt be a division point and it would be well to acquire a large acreage at this time. This acreage will doubtless cost less than a right of way through Evans Second Addition and Lincoln Park, and this route also avoids crossing Streets and Roads already established and in some instances paved. The East Corporation Line is reached by this line and I shall deal with the Arcadia extension under a separate head.

The south line of said acreage touches a point on the East line of the Iona Drainage District from which point said District has excavated a canal, the spoil bank of which will provide ample material for a railway grade as well as a highway. This spoil bank extends a distance of ten miles or more to the South. I am of the opinion that a right of way could be secured at little or no cost paralleling this canal or a perpetual easement or title to a width sufficient for a railroad secured as the Drainage District has retained a Right of Way from 170 to 250 feet wide.

Fort Myers to Naples

The first ten miles of this route is outlined above. From the point where the line turns southeast after crossing the Tamiami Trail to the Township line South of Estero is level pineland offering no difficulty in building a roadbed. From this point to Naples I have outlined a route as near the coast as the topography of the country permits, crossing the Estero River about one mile West of the present townsite, and Imperial River about two miles west of Bonita Springs. At these points high banks are found. It will be necessary to have draw bridges at both of these rivers.

After a careful examination of the beach, inland bays and shore lines just inside Doctors Pass, which is located about Section 21-49-25, I am convinced that this will offer an excellent harbor. This can be made by dredging a channel from the larger of the inland bays to the Gulf and using the excavated material to fill the low areas along the shore. A spur could be run south to such point as would make the best depot site for Naples.

Townsite between Fort Myers and Naples.

The intersection of the above line with the Tamiami Trail and the crossing points on the Estero and Imperial Rivers offer desirable locations for townsites.

Route from Naples to Miami.

I assume that you desire to reach substantially the same line that I laid out for you in 1917-1918 from Miami to the Gulf. I would suggest as near a straight line as practical to a point at the head of Turner River. I do not think there is any reason from a topographic standpoint why a straight point cannot be followed. From there run southeasterly to the point known as Chevelier, thence as nearly due East as is practical to Miami and your terminals there. A roadbed can be constructed on this line at a very reasonable cost. The only difficulty encountered is through Ranges 37 and 38, where in places muck to a depth of six feet is found. However this class of work was easily handled on the Tamiami Trail by removing the muck and replacing it with rock excavated from their canal by means of a floating dredge.

I will not take up at this time the use of the spoil bank or the details of entering Miami.

Fort Myers to Arcadia.

As Arcadia is situated due North of Fort Myers, I would advise crossing the Caloosahatchee River as near the East line of Fort Myers as possible, and running straight for Arcadia. The cost of bridging the River at this point will be more than offset by the decreased mileage, with its decreased cost of upkeep and operation.

Summary

There are no unusual difficulties on the whole route from an engineering standpoint, and the only expensive part of the work will be the bridging of the Caloosahatchee. As a permit has been granted for a highway bridge close to our most favorable location I can foresee no delay in procuring the necessary permit.

J.F.J.S.

The one rule followed has been to secure as many good townsites as possible with the shortest line. I regard the townsites selected as being unusually favorable.

At many points on the line large tracts of heavy timber can be reached by short and inexpensive spur tracks. It is not necessary for me to go into the magnitude of this feature, as I know you are thoroughly familiar with timber conditions in South Florida.

Engineers could start work at any time on the Ft. Myers-Naples line or on the Miami end, but I would advise making the surveys on the part commencing 25 miles from Miami and ending 15 miles South-east of Naples during the dry Winter months.

When the route is definitely located, actual construction could be started at any time on the Ft. Myers-Naples sector. This work may be prosecuted from several points at once, either by station work or with steam shovels or drag lines.

I trust that I can be of some service to you on this work in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

*F. K. Ashworth*  
F. K. Ashworth.  
Civil Engineer.

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