

THE TAMiami TRAIL

What has been done, what is being done, what ought to be done for us to have the use of the Tamiami Trail.

It was noted in these columns last week that Mr. J.F. Jaudon, accompanied by Dr. Robert Ranson, Soil Expert, together with Indian guide, "Boy Jim", who is Mr. Jaudon's almost constant companion, made a trip of inspection over Dade County's part of the Trail, and also extended their examination to that part of the construction on the Tamiami Trail prosecuted by the Chevalier Corporation, of which Mr. Jaudon is president.

An interview with Mr. Jaudon developed that the forty-two miles of the Tamiami Trail constructed by the J.B. McCrary Company for Dade County is really in a passable condition, but there are some very bad spots in the road which can better be shown by photographs than explained in language, and we are carrying in this article a number of cuts (with the proper explanatory foot notes on each) showing the Trail at various points between Miami and the Monroe County line.

The matter of really completing and putting in a really passable condition Dade County's portion of the Trail is now a matter of arbitration between the J.B. McCrary Company and the County Commissioners of Dade County, and Mr. Jaudon emphatically says that no matter where the responsibility lies - whether McCrary is liable to the county, or whether he is relieved from the contract, that Dade County should at once put its portion of the Tamiami Trail in passable condition. In other words, the thirty-four miles which was constructed by the J.B. McCrary Company, has bumps and ruts which could be at very little expense, but in fairly passable condition, and the County Commissions have assured the people of Dade County that this will be done just as soon as the arbitration is entered into with the J.B. McCrary Company. Naturally, additional funds will have to be provided to put this portion of the Trail up to the standard of Dade County, but it can be put in a really passable state to the Monroe County line at very little expense.

When asked as to what the Chevalier Corporation is doing in the matter of road construction in Monroe County, he exhibited some interesting kodak views, which are reproduced in this article

(with the proper explanatory foot note). He said that ever since the proposition was accepted by Dade and Lee Counties to locate a portion of the Tamiami Trail through Monroe County, that he and his company have earnestly, diligently and faithfully tried to perform on that portion of the work which they obliged themselves to construct. In 1918, when this revised route was adopted, he and his company spent some \$25,000 or \$30,000 trying to begin their portion of the work, beginning their portion of the work at the Gulf of Mexico and working eastward towards Miami. They transported floating dredges from Miami to the Gulf Coast, carried a Buckeye ditching machine and barges from Miami to the point on the Gulf, in an effort to begin prosecution of the work and meet Dade County going from the east, but their base of supplies was Key West, their line of communication and supplies was more than seventy-five miles from their work, and after spending enormous sums of money, they were forced to abandon any prosecution of the work assumed by them, until Dade County had reach their property from the east, or Lee (now Collier County) had reached their property line from the west; but now, and he emphasized the "now", he asks the people of Dade County and the State of Florida to examine the kodak views and the cuts carried in this article, and let them be the judges as to whether they are now performing their obligations.

Mr. Jaudon said that they could have begun operations immediately upon the McCrary outfit reaching the Monroe County line, and have continued the work of the McCrary outfit into Monroe County, but an unlooked for delay was occasioned by the cutting of the openings through the Tamiami Trail, and the construction of bridges, which was demanded of the Dade County Commissioners by the State Drainage Board, in the belief that it would give relief to a possible over-flow of the lands to the north (Mr. Jaudon when asked what he thought of these bridges, said he did not desire to discuss them at this time, as he preferred to confine himself, in this interview at least, to the Miami Trail.

During this delay, the Chevelier Corporation purchased from the Ingersoll-Rand people, modern machinery for drilling rock. The cut will show an air drill which is putting down holes for

blasting rock to construct the trail at the rate of about 10' for each minute and a half actual drilling. In fact, they are making two or three times as much progress, drilling the holes deeper and securing better rock, than the McCrary Company were able to do by the method of drilling by hand and blasting with shallow holes.

The hardest portion of the Tamiami Trail undertaken by the Chevelier Corporation is the first three miles, which is open prairie with soil above same of a depth of from one to three feet, underlying which is a limestone rock. Three miles from the Dade County line, starts pine timber (a cut of which is carried in this article) and through which the Chevelier Corporation during the past year has had engineers laying out the Tamiami Trail covering the right-of-way and through which for approximately three miles they have laid the foundation rock for the Tamiami Trail - in fact, as Mr. Jaudon expressed it "there is only about eight miles of the Tamiami Trail through Monroe County which his corporation will construct, but that they have done considerable work on, either in actual building the road or cutting the right-of-way on the line selected for the Trail."

He said there has been no specified meeting point on the Collier County line, but that the Engineers of the Chevelier Corporation advise that the proper meeting point for the Monroe-Collier County line ^{is} between Townships 53 and 54 in Range 32, and at some point in this township the road connection between the two counties will certainly be made. He called the reporter's attention to the fact that the noteroade, which was so badly planned and so illy carried out, last year, of necessity, by reason of the natural topography of the country, was compelled to follow almost the identical lines now laid down by the Chevelier Corporation through Monroe County.

Mr. Jaudon said that the three miles of prairie ahead of the dredge, will no doubt be constructed within three months; that the additional fifteen miles of road (three miles of which has already been constructed, and right-of-way almost the entire distance), can and will be constructed by the Chevelier Corporation, so that the road will be in a good passable condition sometime early next winter. Thus, when Dade County's portion of the Tamiami Trail is put in

good condition, he said most emphatically, that the people of Dade County and Florida, can be assured of the Tamiami Trail in good condition from Miami to the Collier County line sometime during the winter of 1924-5.

When asked about Collier County, he said that he had received a letter from Capt. Geo. W. Storter, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners of Collier County, stating they had placed a Bay City dredge at work on the Tamiami Trail at the point where it intersects the Deep Lake Railway. This Bay City dredge is throwing the road bed eastward towards Miami. Capt. Storter did not state how rapidly this road construction was being done, but as the point of connection suggested by Mr. Jaudon is about fifteen miles from Everglade, he says that Collier County should be able to complete its work to the Monroe County line within a year, but he believes that if the County Commissioners of Collier County realized that Dade and Monroe Counties would complete and have passable the Tamiami Trail to Collier County line, that they would put additional equipment and force at work to the end that they could and would complete this job at or about the same time as Dade County and the Chevelier Corporation.

Mr. Jaudon is advised that the Tamiami Trail from Everglade to Naples is now passable, but as a matter of fact, needs a whole lot more money spent on hard surfacing to stand the heavy traffic which the Tamiami Trail will be called upon to bear when it is opened to the public.

Mr. Jaudon exhibited a letter from a friend of his in Naples, who advised that the Tamiami Trail from Naples to Ft. Myers is now in excellent condition - in fact, is in better shape than it has been at any time since the construction of this part of the Trail.

The people at Ft. Myers and between Ft. Myers and Tampa are agitating the completion of the Trail from Tampa to Fort Myers - in fact, they are to hold a celebration at an early date at Ft. Myers on the occasion of the opening of this portion of the Trail. As a matter of fact, ^{the} really hard construction work of the Tamiami Trail was between Miami and Ft. Myers, and in all justice and in all fairness, the State Road department and those interested, should at this

time find some way to aid Dade County in putting its portion of the Tamiami Trail in far better condition than the condition which the J.B. McCrary Company delivered same to Dade County. In all justice and fairness, the Chevelier Corporation of Monroe County, and Collier County deserve some consideration and aid at the hands of the State Road Department.