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MODEL LAND COMPANY

FLAGLER SYSTEM

OFFICE OF PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

J. E. INGRAHAM
PRESIDENT

S. HARRISON
SECT. AND TREAS.

Broward 550,000 acres bond 4 1/2 millions
143,000 acres bond 1,400,000 millions St. Augustine, Fla.

May 19, 1919.

Mr. Fred'k. S. Morse,
Miami, Fla.

Dear sir:-

As you are aware the Model Land Company is a member of the Miami Chamber of Commerce and you represent us under our membership. The Perrin Grant Land Company is also a member of the Miami Chamber of Commerce and is represented by you and, in both cases, during your absence I understand by Mr. Pepper.

During my illness the Broward Drainage District was created, also the Southern Drainage District. Of neither of these Districts had I any knowledge until this term of the Legislature. In fact I had no knowledge that we were interested at all in the Southern Drainage District until we began our opposition to the Broward Drainage District bill.

The most objectionable features developed in the Broward Drainage Bill were as follows:

1. The Board of Supervisors are authorized by the bill to levy an unlimited amount of taxes, for an unlimited period of years.
2. The Board is authorized to issue an unlimited amount of bonds, for an unlimited period of time.
3. The Board is authorized to change the boundary of the District at pleasure, without notice.
4. There is no appeal from the Board, nor from the Court's orders.
5. There is no limitation placed upon the power of the Board relating to disbursements or the use of the funds, or the plan of reclamation, and the Board is not required to report to anyone.

After considerable controversy with the Representatives and Senators introducing this bill the above objectionable

features were amended as follows:

1. For the adoption of a unit system not exceeding 100,000 acres, in which unit system the supervisors are empowered to assess benefits as a means of financing the improvements contemplated within the restricted area, which unit is by the amendment bounded, described and fixed in the law.

2. One of the amendments provides that the remainder of the present District, approximating 528,000 acres, or approximately 438,000 acres lying outside of the first unit, is assessed in law at 10¢ per acre per annum, as against the approximate estimate fixed at between \$12.00 and \$14.00 per acre on the entire District by the provisions of the original Bill before it was amended. In other words the amendment provides for 10¢ per acre per annum on 438,000, whereas the original Bill provided for an assessment between \$12.00 and \$14.00 per acre on the same area.

3. Under the original Bill as heretofore pointed out the Supervisors were empowered to extend the boundary of the District at pleasure and without notice. The amendment takes care of this situation by eliminating the power to extend the boundaries. ~~It is provided in the original Bill that the Board of Supervisors may extend the boundary of the District at pleasure and without notice.~~

4. The original Bill provided that land owners contesting any of the proceedings were prohibited from filing a demurrer or a plea in a suit, also prohibited from taking an appeal. An amendment was adopted which provides that any legal proceedings involving the provisions of this Act shall conform to the general judicial proceedings under Laws and Rules of Practice in the State of Florida. This is for the purpose of eliminating the provisions denying to the land owners the usual rights accorded defendants or parties in litigation.

5. An amendment making the Act harmonize with the amendatory provisions of the law, changing the system of procedure from the district plan to the unit plan, thus limiting the bond issue on the district to the values fixed by the assessed benefits in the unit, which is comparatively small, and to the amount that 10¢ per acre per annum would justify as distinguished from the valuation of the whole district on the basis of assessed benefits fixed at between \$12.00 and \$14.00 per acre.

Would particularly call your attention to the desirability of the unit plan over the district plan, whereby the lands receiving the benefit bear the burden of the tax. Under the district plan a large acreage would be paying heavy drainage taxes for years before they received any benefit.

The Southern Drainage District Bill is a facsimile of the Broward Drainage District Bill and has the same objectionable features and we have been trying to get them amended along the same lines as the Broward Drainage District Bill. Our Companies have in this Southern Drainage District over 6,000 acres. We are very anxious to have the same amendments made to the Southern Drainage District bill as we have been able to get in the Broward Drainage District Bill, and as it is conceded by those representing the Broward District that the Bill as amended is a much better Bill and will be a greater protection and benefit to the land owners than the Bill as originally introduced, under these circumstances it seems to me that there should be but little opposition to these amendments being made to the Souther Drainage Distfict Bill.

There may be some question and it may develop that our companies are opposing the Bill in its original form. Which is the truth. We think, in view of this fact, that it might be well if you will see the Editor of the Miami Herald and give him our side of the case, showing the arbitrary provisions in the bill as it originally stands and the amendments which we are asking to be introduced. We are in hopes to be able to do this and would like all the support possible on your side.

Yours truly,

Sidney Harrison
Secretary-Treasurer.

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