

December - 31 - 23.

Subject, - Proposed Drainage District
South of Florida City.

Mr. J. E. Ingraham, President,
Nedol Land Company,
St. Augustine, Florida.

Dear Sir :-

On the 17th instant in company of Messrs, Frank J. Pepper, Milo O. Coffrin, A. K. Livingston, and Mr. Sumner of Homestead we left Homestead by car, went to Florida City then due east along the south bank of the Florida City canal for a little over 4 miles. Here we left our car and struck ~~right~~ a line a little east of south right across the prairie. We were very fortunate in having selected such a dry time for this investigation, as there was no water to be waded at all. Immediately after leaving the canal bank we were crossing land that had once been covered with small range growth. All of this growth was dead and from all indications had been dead for some four or five years. The first land we crossed for one mile was a section owned by Taber Bros. The first section that we saw to owned by the Nedol Land Company was Sec. 35, Tp. 57, R. 39. After crossing the north east corner of this section we tried to follow the section line dividing section 35 and 36. We follow a line as near south as was possible trying to stay on the section line of the following sections, I, 2, II, 12, 14, 13, 23, 24, that is the line dividing these sections. In section 23 and 24 we only followed the line for about a quarter of a mile then took a south-westerly direction crossing the north west end of sec. 26 and crossing near the center of secs. 27, 28 and 29 following almost a due west course, these last secs. being in Tp. 58, Range 39; which carried us to the Florida East Coast Ry. Co's right-of-way.

I was very much surprised with the dryness of this land that we crossed ~~first~~, second, I was very much surprised with the uniform condition of the soil. While there was a difference in the soil there was not near the difference I had expected to find, and third, I did not think we would find the depth of soil as a whole ~~that~~ we did find. To start with we had about three feet of soil, I mean that it was about that deep to rock. This soil was composed of saw grass that was only partly decomposed and other aquatic grasses and weeds mixed with considerable small shell, mostly oyster, and more or less lime rock wash, or that was what I thought gave the soil its white cast. This soil was very soft. Any one in walking over it would sink in for about three inches, sometime a little more and other times not quite as much. This was the softest or lightest type of soil that we crossed in the nine miles. The next type of soil that we crossed was a little firmer, did not seem to have as much undecayed humus in it, and we crossed one other type. This last was very firm, any one would not leave a

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a clear track in walking over it for the first time. There was not any very large tracts of the last type, and not as much of the second type mentioned as the first, that is there was a much larger acreage of the soft spongy types that of both of the others put together. As we got nearer to the western edge of the sections I have mentioned we found that the rock came much nearer to the surface, but we did not make soundings at any place where the rock was nearer than 8 to 10 inches, and as well as I could tell as to location this shallow soil was in secs. 36 and 27 -58-39; in secs. 28 and 29, 58-39 there was a few inches more of soil.

I am very confident that all of the soil we crossed in the nine miles we walked after leaving the car on the Florida City canal, will produce good crops, still I was not familiar enough with that class of soil to know how soon the soft spongy soil would become firm enough so a team could be put on it, therefore was anxious to see some of the same type of soil that had been worked one or more years. Both Mr. Livingston and Mr. Hunter told me that all the farmers considered that if there was as much as six or eight inches of soil that the land was good for farming. On Tuesday afternoon after we had taken a boat ride around the shore line of this tract of land we had time to go out on some of the land of exactly the same type of soil as that we had crossed on Monday. This was land that had been put in such condition that farmers could get on it by the cutting of the Florida City canal. Some of this land was being farmed for the first time this year, other parts of sections had been farmed one year and was lying out at this time. After going over these fields I am willing to say that there is no better farming land in the territory around Florida City and Homestead than most of this land, provided the water can be properly controlled on it.

Unless there was a great deal more difference in the elevations of the sections that we walked over, than there looked to me to be, practically every acre in each of these sections could be put under cultivation. There was not any thing along the line we took to lead me to think there would be any waste land. There were a few little hummocks; but they were very small, and it is my opinion that they were only a few inches higher than the surrounding land. Therefore from an agricultural stand point I would say the tract of land that the Model Land Company owns in this territory is very valuable, if it can be properly drained. I certainly was very pleasantly surprised to find the quality of land that I did in the territory, and after I was able to see what was being done with the exact type of soil in the same territory, after it had been drained I am confident if the drainage of this tract of land is practicable, and can be done economically it should be done some time. It might not be the best thing to try and get it done all at once nor in a short time, for there is considerable other lands that are nearer to transportation and that are good lands that have not yet been put to use. Still the Company owns a fine body of land in the territory that we went over if it can be drained, and a

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seems to me that if the information as to the draining of the land did not cost too large a sum it would be well worth while to get .

In reclaiming this land it is my opinion that it is going only to be suitable to grow vegetables and truck crops on. That is such as citrus fruit, Avocado and other trees will not do well. Bananas and cocoa nuts would do O.K. though, and of course I may be mistaken as to the trees; but my idea is that the water table will not be low enough for the root system of the trees, especially in time of ~~fast~~ ^{flood} water .

Yours very truly,

Wm W Lendon
Agricultural Agent .