

(COPY)

Office of
J. P. Conrad,
Supervisor-Treasurer

P. O. Box 286

SOUTHERN DRAINAGE DISTRICT

of
Florida

Miami, Fla., Oct. 31st, 1929.

Mr. Frank J. Pepper,
Ingraham Building,
City.

My dear Mr. Pepper:

Doubtless you have noted in the News the campaign for a Dade Conservancy District to supplant the drainage districts now in existence.

I do not see how they can put this over immediately as they demand without a special session of the legislature, which I understand the Governor will not call.

As we were created by the legislature, and are under their control it is my opinion that only the legislature or court action could abolish our district.

However, I am informed that Vance Helm and the News crowd are laying the ground work to abolish all sub-drainage districts and in their stead have one district embodying all of Dade County.

The plan, as I understand it is to issue bonds and to do so they are compelled to take in the Southern Drainage District, as we are the only district without bonded or other indebtedness.

This would be manifestly unfair to your lands and the other land owners as our canals belong to you land owners and are paid for in full.

Under the present management of our district, you have the opportunity to meet in land owners meetings and tell the supervisors what you wish for the years program.

At the last land owners meeting you requested we stop work on Snapper Creek and the Black Point Canals and that we take the tax off for the year 1930 and our board showed their good faith by so doing.

Without the tax for 1929, we have just let a contract for 16 miles of canals in the western division of our district to carry the western water toward Shark River, so that it would not back up over the dikes now being put in by Mr. Milam's Board.

Glenn Scott Asst. Chief State Drainage Engineer told me that this action on our part assured the success of the diking proposition as the only fear they had was that the water would back up and overflow their dikes.

To be able to do this and keep our district out of debt and to take the tax off entirely for two years has taken the most rigid economy and watchfulness on our part, and when you consider that our normal tax rate is the lowest of any district in the state, by far, it places our district in a class by itself.

I fought the incorporation of the eastern part of our district in the Dade District and succeeded in keeping our district intact and this is the same old fight only disguised under another name.

The Coral Gables people want the district to pay for their canal and right of way and to widen and deepen it which would reach a staggering cost, which our people can ill afford to pay in additional taxes at this time.

If they succeed in taking over all the districts into the Dade Conservancy District, I would deed away my land as, I knowing the program, could not afford to hold it longer.

As to the editorials stating that there was great discord and dissention between the different boards, I do not believe Mr. Milam himself would agree.

I certainly heard none of it, and the decisions were quickly made and I think it was to the great credit of Mr. Milam, Ralph Horton, Chief Elliot and all the designated spokesmen for the different districts that they all proved themselves big enough for their jobs.

I found no discord of any kind and this is just raw propoganda to put over the scheme to abolish our district and incorporate it in one big district, along with the indebtedness of these other districts and the bigger proposed indebtedness.

This is a serious situation for the tax payers and the reason the small districts were formed was because they would not be so unwieldy and cumbersome and would be nearer the people in their districts.

We have at all times, as you well know, listened to the advice of our landowners, and we feel we have made a wonderful record in keeping this district free from debt, with only direct tax money and that at the lowest tax rate of any district and yet we are able to show more miles of paid for canals in the State, if not the United States.

May we not ask that you lend your efforts in combating the formation of the Dade Conservancy District.

This could be done by newspaper letters and interviews from the land owners themselves, if I took this work on myself, they would immediately answer that I was trying to save my job, which you know is as far as salary is concerned not much of a job.

You know that the land owners could not stop the building of the Black Point canal if the Dade Conservancy District was formed and I suggest you get Messrs. Kerr, Paxson, Fletcher, Fowler, Dan Killian, and others interested to write the Herald showing the land owners side of it.

I shall fight this bill when it comes to the legislature as I am sure we can depend on the support of Senator Watson, and as practically all the sponsors of this bill are strong Carlton supporters it will be no easy task to defeat same unless there is a strong support from the land owners. I am not afraid of this bill passing if I am able to get an amendment to the bill that there will be a referendum at which only land owners of the district may vote.

I know the land owners of our district would be with us nearly, if not 100%.

If it is possible for you to get the Herald to see our side of this and to combat the News editorials it would be a great help as we ~~xxxx~~ too must lay the ground work for the fight against this bill.

Yours truly,
J. P. Conrad,

P.S. I would suggest you ask every candidate for the legislature to state his position on this Dade Conservancy Bill.

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