

Kissimmee, Fla., March 20, 1916.

Mrs. Melville W. Carruth, State Regent,
D. A. R.,
Tampa, Fla.

My dear Mrs. Carruth:

I did not realize when I wrote you that it would be so long before I sent you the information you desired. For two or three reasons I have been delaying it, but I take the opportunity this morning to give it to you.

I enclose herewith a copy of the resolutions as endorsed by the D. A. R., for your special use, as I am having these resolutions sent all over the country.

I will embody in this letter the answers to the questions you ask, which are rather well covered in the resolutions. These resolutions have been approved by the Indian Department and by a number of prominent people who are working for this cause.

In answer to question No. 1 in your letter -- We have asked for one thousand acres in the Everglades of Florida -- enough land to enable these Seminoles to engage in agricultural pursuits and the live stock industry, which will also give them enough area for their hunting grounds.

Your second question -- What has been given to the Seminoles? Twenty-three thousand acres a number of years ago by the United States Government. This land is low, flat and water-covered. It has a growth of small, worthless, scattered cypress. It has been estimated that about 5% of this land might be made available, but the Seminoles have never used it. Three or four years ago the Government gave about two thousand acres of rather good land. Upon this land it is proposed to locate a demonstration farm if the appropriation at Washington goes through.

I had a letter from Mrs. Grace Julian Clark, Press chairman and Executive Director of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, in which she commends the resolutions as endorsed by the D. A. R., and wants them presented at the Biennial in New York City the last of May. The whole country seems to be aroused over the condition of our Seminoles.

For your better information, let me add in this letter the recommendations that the National Indian Rights Association will make after having ^{been} ~~visit~~ ⁷⁰ with these Seminoles in the 'Glades about a month ago. I am just in receipt of this, after the Recording Secretary has been in conference with the Indian and Interior Departments in Washington. They are as follows:

#2.
Mrs. Carruth.

"That Congress be asked to appropriate a sufficient sum to equip (1) a demonstration farm on the Seminole reservation near Chancey Bay, in charge of a competent Indian employe from Oklahoma; (2) that a day school be established at the same point, in charge of a competent Oklahoma Indian as Teacher.

"That a special appropriation of \$25,000 for land purchase be asked from Congress, and that Special Commissioner Spencer be authorized to ascertain what suitable lands are available for purchase; and

"That Florida be asked to redeem its recognized and admitted obligation to the Seminoles by setting aside lands for their use and benefit."

The second paragraph does not seem necessary to me, since Florida owns the lands and must sell them back to the United States Government. Still, this is in the hands of the Indian Rights Association.

I am enclosing you a list of addresses for the resolutions which you kindly offer to send. These are far-reaching mediums, as these resolutions will then go into type, and also into Government officials hands all over the country, since I have been in correspondence with these different people for two or three years on this subject. The endorsement of the D. A. R. State Conference, for which I must thank our splendid State Regent, will carry great weight.

They are waking up in Washington, and I must tell you one thing that is causing the temper of our State Regent and her husband to be so ruffled.

In 1899, after Inspector of Indian Affairs J. E. Duncan, brother-in-law of President McKinley, who visited us on his way to the Everglades, and his influence with the Departments had caused the wonderfully humane interest in these Indians. At that time, the Secretary of the Interior gave the Hon. Duncan instructions, which he carried out. These were printed in the Report of the Secretary of the Interior in 1898. As I started to say -- in 1899 (and I have a copy of this bill) the Florida Legislature made a land appropriation, following to the letter these instructions. However, in that bill was a "joker", which I will quote:

"Provided that nothing in this act shall be construed so as to make the State of Florida or the Board of Trustees of the I. L. Fund of the State of Florida liable to make good the title to any lands embraced in this act that have heretofore been conveyed or certified to any person, persons, or corporation."

Governor Bloxam approved the bill. The copy as sent me from the Government is headed, "NOT LOCATED." These are the lands called the Cape Sable District, and do not lie a great distance from Royal Palm Hammock; and our friends who are opposing me and my methods are largely interested in this land.

#3.
Mrs. Carruth.

points
I have been assured by these *Wash* envoys from Washington that they are working for me, and fighting my battles, and approve my way of working the subject; saying that those who are opposed are afraid that something will be uncovered, and that these "land grabbers" ~~can~~ have to be "smoked out."

You will notice that the resolutions do not say anything about "worthless lands." Another point that may come up is the Indian's prior right of occupancy, and the illegal taking of the Indian's homes by white men, which did not come under the act of Congress granting "swamp and overflowed lands" to the State of Florida, as the lands the Indians were living on were not overflowed or swamp.

If I have not given you all the information you want, will you write to me and I will try to answer by return mail.

I am in ~~my~~ ^{not well} usual health -- having so many terrible headaches; and feel like you, that I wish I had the strength of ten men.

Your high position, your big heart, and your capabilities make your influence very powerful, and you are a soldier with it all. I wish I might help you more; but I do thank you in the name of those hungry people for all you have done and are doing.

With much love, I am

Cordially yours,

MSW-RP
Enclosures (2)