

August 29, 1925.

Hon. John W. Martin,
Governor of Florida,
Tallahassee, Florida.

Re Florida's Gift to America.

Dear Governor Martin:

I do not know you personally, yet you are well known to me because of your remarkably fine career -- and because you are Florida's Governor, wielding a tremendous influence.

I am appealing to you, first, to ask your cooperation in a plan by which Florida may have in the Everglades a refuge which I will call a "Memorial Sanctuary" and which will eventually become a National preserve.

Five years ago this work of mine had reached a high peak. I was suddenly taken ill and my years of illness has kept the subject quiescent. I am ready today to start a propaganda that will be nation-wide. This is my idea: I want to secure by legislative action at least 100,000 in the heart of the Everglades, a haven for the migratory birds of the whole North American Continent, for Florida's native birds and for the fast-disappearing forest creatures of the Everglades, as well as a place for the Seminole Indians to be free to go and come; and I can assure the most skeptical that they will help protect the wild life -- and to preserve what is left of the wilderness beauty of the Jungle Everglades.

I am going to ask for not less than 100,000 acres. I want to do this pleasantly and graciously. The humane point appeals to the good citizenship of America and I have assurance of front-page help from the press.

Governor Martin, I know the condition of the Everglades as they are today -- a ruined territory to a great degree -- once a beautiful wilderness and the only thing of its kind in America or in the world. I have lines

from many angles on the drainage of the Everglades, that are so staggering -- yes, and almost criminal -- that it gives me a firm base for broadcasting and New York is ready for my story. Before it is too late, let us save a portion of this land for a Sanctuary, which will be to the eternal glory of Florida and the lasting credit of yourself.

Subterranean streams,, as we all know, present insuperable difficulties in the way of successful drainage. It is unnecessary at this writing for me to go into any further detail. Like the mistakes that come to all countries, the conception of the drainage of the Everglades was a terrific one. The first promoters were possibly honest in their vision, but in view of later developments the proposition is chimerical.

In my press clippings and State advertising pamphlets I have nearly all the details since the beginning of the drainage plans. I hold the secret of the first thought of an Everglade sale -- but Florida did not make the sale.-- expert testimony, secret surveys, etc., would not warrant the purchase.

To a syndicate that is waiting to help me in this work, I am going to say tomorrow, regarding the trouble now pending over the lands in Florida in which Baron Collier is so interested:

"Our Governor, John W. Martin, is every inch a man and will do whatever is right in every way to protect the citizens who are so deeply concerned in these land troubles."

I am coming to you first for your co-operation and any suggestions from you will be gratefully received. I am tremendously in earnest in this matter, and am not dismayed at any seeming difficulties. I worked four Legislatures before I got my Seminole land bill through, which gave the Indians 100,000 acres. This is a much easier proposition, as the eyes of the world are on Florida, and we can make this Sanctuary an asset and a monument to the State. Will you help me?

Very sincerely,

Dict. MMW-V.

P.S. Under separate cover I am mailing you a brochure, "The Birds of the Everglades."