

## PREFATORY NOTE.

As early as the year 1845, the attention of the Government of the United States was officially called to the Everglades of Florida. In that year the Legislature of Florida, by a joint resolution, instructed the Senators and requested the Representative from that State to press upon the National Congress the importance of examining and surveying the Everglades, with a view to their reclamation.

In 1847 Hon. J. D. Westcott, Jr., United States Senator from Florida, by a letter, requested the Secretary of the Treasury to appoint "an agent to make a reconnoissance of these lands, and make a report as to the probable practicability of the work (of reclamation), to be laid before Congress at its next session."

In response to this request, the Secretary of the Treasury, on June 18, 1847, appointed Mr. Buckingham Smith, of St. Augustine, Fla., to procure "authentic information in relation to what are generally called the 'Ever Glades' on the peninsula of Florida," "for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability and expediency of draining them."

On June 1, 1848, Mr. Smith submitted to the Secretary of the Treasury his celebrated report on the subject named. This report, accompanied by a collection of letters and other papers, was, on August 10, 1848, submitted by the Secretary of the Treasury to the Senate, and with it modern, scientific knowledge of the Everglades of Florida began. These papers the Senate of the United States published in full in its "Reports for the first session of the Thirtieth Congress." In the same year Senator Westcott procured the printing of extra copies of this report and appendix "for distribution," as he states, "where he hopes it may be of service."

In the 63 years which have since elapsed, interest in the reclamation of the Everglades, already keen in 1848, has become Nation-wide, and to-day the State of Florida, equipped with ample funds and expert supervision, is actually engaged with vigor in the drainage of this vast tract.

Through the activities of private individuals, the State of Florida, and the Nation itself knowledge of the Everglades region has at the same time materially increased, and public documents, national and State, pertaining to it have multiplied. These include formal reports by experts from the bureaus in Washington, messages from governors of Florida, and the findings of investigating committees appointed by the legislature of the State. The demand has now arisen that these State papers, in so far as still relevant, be brought together and made available to the general public. Accordingly, a compilation of acts, reports, and other papers, State and national, relating to the Everglades was submitted to the Committee on Printing by Hon. Duncan U. Fletcher, United States Senator from Florida, with the request that it be printed as a public document. In accordance therewith, Senate resolution No. 130, authorizing the printing of this compilation, was reported from the Committee on Printing, considered in the Senate by unanimous consent, and agreed to on August 7, 1911.



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