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Records made by Government engineers, practicable demonstration by the people's dredge, pamphlets, documents, books and manuscripts are on file in the State House.

The history of this Everglades drainage project is full of evidence touching on its importance and its feasibility. No man has ever touched it without becoming convinced of its practicability and its desirability.

Every one who has investigated it has become an enthusiastic advocate of it.

The first resolution adopted by the State of Florida in Legislative assembly contained this language:

"Whereas, Recent information derived from the most respectable sources has induced the belief . . . that at a comparatively small expense the aforesaid region (the Everglades) can be entirely reclaimed, thus opening to the habitation an unexplored domain, perhaps unsurpassed in fertility and every natural advantage to be found in any other part of the globe—"

Then followed a resolution inviting the attention of the general Government to this matter.

W. D. Mosely, first Governor of Florida, transmitted this resolution to the President of the United States and to the two Senators from Florida.

The next Legislature to assemble in Florida passed another Everglades resolution, in which this language is used:

Whereas, It is believed that a large portion of said lands (the Everglades) MAY BE DRAINED BY CANALS, reclaimed and made valuable for the cultivation of tropical fruits and plants, and

"Whereas, It is believed that these lands, if reclaimed, would not only remunerate this State for the expense of such reclamation, but would yield a considerable surplus above such expense—"

Then followed a resolution asking Congress to grant the entire area.

In August, 1848, Senator Westcott introduced in the United States Senate Bill No. 242, which was reported favorably by the Committee on Public Lands. That bill contained this language:

"The said State shall, on or before the 1st day of January, 1851, cause to be commenced, under the direction of a competent engineer, the construction of DRAINS AND CANALS for draining the Everglades aforesaid, for DECREASING THE WATERS OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE, and so that, if practicable, a communication may be made by such canals, for vessels between the Gulf and Atlantic waters. That said State shall not sell, alien, transfer, pledge or mortgage, or otherwise dispose of said lands, or any part thereof, or any of the rights or privileges derived from this grant, except to affect the full and faithful fulfillment of aid condition above stated, and the entire avails and proceeds of any disposition thereof, or any part thereof, made by said State, shall be EXCLUSIVELY AND SACREDLY APPROPRIATED TO THE COMPLETION OF SAID WORK."

Then followed an act of Congress, approved September 28th, 1850, which contained practically the same language as Senate Bill No. 242. It will be seen that the language used by Senator Westcott in 1848 was almost word for word the language used by Governor Broward in 1905, and repeated by him whenever occasion offered from that time to this.

It is now up to the Legislature to place itself on record as being wise enough TO SEE A GREAT PROJECT, and to exert statesmanship enough to grasp it while there is time.

Selfish persons are opposed to the consummation of this project.

Show me the man who talks against it, and I will show you a man who has some interest in opposing it.

There are perhaps some persons opposing it who are not informed, and are honest in their opposition according to their lights; but THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR ANY ONE NOT BEING INFORMED.

It is the duty of legislators TO BE INFORMED. Powerful interests are selfishly arrayed against this project. It is the duty of the Legislature TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE from these interests.

I have said that it is Governor Broward's project; I will, upon second thought, say that it is mine, it is yours, it is everybody's who takes time to investigate it.

Governor Broward saw it before some of the rest of us did, but he cannot lay claim to it as his own, because it BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA, and becomes, for that reason, the project of EVERY ONE WHO IS INTERESTED in the State's greatest opportunity.

This Legislature should not fail to put upon the statute books a law which will prevent selfish interests opposed to this project from interfering with its continued prosecution, until it is brought to its glorious consummation.

A PERNICIOUS PAMPHLET, THIS.

Mr. John Ruge, of Apalachicola, has issued a pamphlet against the child labor bill.

The first paragraph is capable of correction. One would think that a child labor law movement is something new in the United States.

As a matter of fact, there are now only three States of the Union without any legal protection for the toiling children—

Mississippi, Nevada and Florida.

That is the complete list.

Even little sister Oklahoma put an anti-child labor plank in its Constitution.

Mr. Ruge's chief complaint seems to be that the labor unions favor the bill. The advocacy of the good women is tainted by this source. Even the clergy are used as "catpaws."

The fact leaks out, however, that Mr. Ruge is not entirely disinterested.

He is an employer of child labor in his oyster canneries. He asserts that the canneries pay out \$150,000 in labor and wages a year and that Apalachicola is the chief distribution point for this vast sum.

Now, just an ounce of fact in twelve pages of imagination and argument.

The oyster canning industry of Apalachicola employed last year five Bohemian families from Baltimore, about sixteen workers and three or four children under 14.

Their average wage must have been beyond the dream

of avarice.

Mr. Ruge's canning plant has been shut down for over two years.

Most all of his plants are outside of Florida.

Speaking of the selfishness of the labor unions in trying to keep the children out of competition with grown men, how about the defeat of the child labor bill in the last Legislature by Mr. Ruge in the hope that he might employ some children?

How about his present opposition to the bill with his Apalachicola works shut down?

Mr. Ruge says that only negro children work in the oyster canneries. Next he says that the negroes will not work, and he has to import Bohemians from Baltimore.

So Mr. Ruge wants the bill amended so that perishable things may be cured.

The little children are not perishable. Says Mr. Ruge, their eyes and nerves are more acute.

Especially the nerves.

I am informed that Apalachicola rather resents being put in the position of resisting this humane measure for the protection of the children; that the intelligence and Christianity of that city is not in favor of blocking the child labor bill, because a few Bohemian children might be employed to increase the prosperity of the city.

And sensible men know that the way to encourage even negro vagrancy is to let the children work for their idle fathers.

Mr. Ruge admits that the evil is a great one in the cigar factories.

Mr. Ruge is not interested in cigars.

He cans oysters—mostly outside of Florida.

Other States might follow Florida's good example in forbidding the employment of children in shucking oysters.

Shucks!

Mr. Ruge has discovered a law by which a man residing in the State for six months cannot send his children to school.

He is alarmed that the Bohemian children under 14 will not have a chance at an education. So he will sentence them to hard labor to keep them out of mischief.

What does Apalachicola think of this?

What do the people of Florida think of the holding up of this humane measure, really a test of our civilization, for the sake of Mr. Ruge's prospective Bohemian oyster shuckers who happen to be under 14?

No reform measure was ever enacted without selfish opposition.

The opposition to the child labor bill seems to be as small as it is selfish.

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