

## EDITORIAL

## RELIEF FOR FREIGHT CONGESTION.

Of the many important questions involving the comfort and convenience of the people of Florida which are up for solution by the Legislature now in session, the one of improvement in the transportation facilities takes front rank.

In addition to the comfort and convenience of the people, this question of the importance of the transportation facilities has with it an element that vitally concerns every business interest in the State.

Everyone knows that the transportation question in Florida has been a most important one.

Everyone knows that the delays in transportation of commodities have resulted in the paralyzation of business in several cases, and the serious impairment of business profits in many cases.

Sawmill men have been compelled to shut down, because the railroads fail to equip themselves to properly handle the business offered them.

Vegetable growers have been unable to ship their produce to market and thousands of crates of vegetables have rotted in the cars.

Wholesale merchants have been unable to take advantage of the wave of prosperity which has swept the State during the past year, because their salesmen would find on one trip that the orders taken during the previous trip had not been received.

The Railroad Commission has done the best it could to relieve this intolerable condition. The Board of Trade of Ocala took up this question vigorously and got up testimony which enabled the Attorney General to bring mandamus proceedings against one railroad to compel it to equip itself so as to handle commodities offered.

In each case that has been submitted to the Railroad Commission the complainant has been advised to make a written demand for cars, and has been promised the full power of the Railroad Commission exerted in his behalf.

But none of these things have been sufficient.

The mandamus case still drags in the court.

Shippers will not prosecute their causes vigorously, through inertia or fear, and the Railroad Commission is powerless in the premises.

To meet the conditions, Representative Kilgore, of Sumter County, introduced early in the session a bill which is known as House Bill No. 8, directing the Railroad Commission to employ a competent engineer to report on the physical condition of the road bed, right of way, tracks, depots and rolling stock of railroads, and directing them to order the physical property of railroads to be kept in such condition as will enable them to promptly handle merchandise.

This bill has passed the House and is now in Senate as special order today, together with a bill by Senator Hudson carrying practically the same provisions.

These bills are not framed in theory. They were gotten up to meet an actual situation, which every shipper in the State knows to be intolerable.

There has been some abatement of the public outcry against the transportation conditions, or, to put it rightly, the lack of transportation facilities; but this is due more to the fact that people get tired of making outcries, rather than that there has been any improvement. Shippers tell me that the condition is just as bad as ever.

The need for legislation is urgent and pressing. The people of Florida have a right to demand, and do demand the relief that these bills are designed to afford. Today is a good day to enact this law.



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### MANSION BILL WILL BE RECONSIDERED.

MacWilliams Opposes Appropriation and Declares That Blooming Building Should Be Torn Down and Built Over Again.

After a chase for its life, with Mr. MacWilliams hot on the trail with uplifted tomahawk, the bill appropriating \$20,000 for the completion of the Governor's mansion passed yesterday by a vote of 31 to 25.

The vote stood upon first call 30 to 26, but Mr. MacWilliams changed his vote against the bill in order to move reconsideration, notice of which he gave, and the bill will be reconsidered this morning.

The bill came from the committee with an amendment to reduce the amount to \$17,000, but the day previous it was passed on second reading without reference to the amendment, which resulted in some misunderstanding when it was placed on third reading. The bill was read in its original form, providing for the appropriation of \$20,000, and Mr. Howe offered an amendment to strike out \$20,000 and insert \$17,000.

Mr. Wilson of Hernando explained that \$17,000 was not enough to complete the building and purchase furnishings, and buy the additional lots needed to afford adequate grounds. He opposed the amendment and was in favor of spending enough to get grounds of reasonable size and put the mansion in such fitness as would compare with the dignity of the office of Governor.

Mr. MacWilliams was unalterably opposed to the \$25,000 appropriation. He thought just as little as possible should be spent to put the building in habitable condition. He called it an architectural misfit. He really thought just as little as possible should be spent to put the building in habitable condition. He called it an architectural misfit. He really thought it better to "burn the darn thing up" than to spend any more money on it.

Mr. Knight of Citrus said that two years ago when the first appropriation of \$25,000 was asked for he was an enthusiastic advocate of the proposition. The members from Leon had offered then to furnish the site, but it had turned out that not enough ground had been furnished for the Governor to raise turkeys on. He was in favor of \$17,000 or nothing.

Mr. Farris thought it better to appropriate enough money now to complete the mansion and buy the grounds needed than to appropriate half enough and have the matter pending before the next Legislature. He directed attention to the wording of the bill, that \$25,000 "or so much thereof as may be necessary" it did not mean necessarily that the entire amount of \$25,000 would be spent.

Mr. Melton hoped the mansion didn't look as bad to everybody as it did to Mr. MacWilliams. He thought it a pretty good house, and said the appropriation named in the original bill should pass.

Mr. Russell favored the amendment.

Mr. DuPont was violently befuddled. He was on the committee and thought the committee had agreed on \$17,000 as enough. Mr. DuPont had been figuring on a large piece of paper, and gave the House the benefit of his calculations. The Governor was paying \$60 a month rent for a house, which was \$720 a year. If the mansion was to cost \$50,000 it would have to do service for sixty-nine years in order to give the Chief Executive a home at the same cost, and it was doubtful in his mind if the mansion would last so long.

Mr. Griggs wanted to know if it wasn't the idea to furnish the Governor a better home than he had, and if the matter of economy was the only question involved.

"Economy alone," responded Mr. DuPont thunderously. "I voted for the bill for economy alone; never would have voted for it if it hadn't been for economy."

Mr. Reese had a plat for the grounds and the lots which it was desired to purchase and gave these over to the members to inspect. The estimates for completing the house and for the furnishings alone amounted to \$15,000, he said, and it was necessary to have more room to make the grounds of respectable size; otherwise the kitchen would be within forty feet of the back fence; there was no room for a stable or outhouses.

"This is a matter of State pride," said he. "This mansion is the first even erected by the State, and I think it should be completed and furnished in a manner that will reflect credit on the State. The artistic features should not be neglected; we shouldn't be content with just providing some sort of a house for the Governor to live in and give no thought to the grounds and conveniences."

Mr. MacWilliams declared that for his part he was willing to tear the blooming thing down and build it over again. It was set in the back yards of everybody living on Monroe street, he said, and was surrounded by negro shacks.

Mr. Wells of Leon interposed: "Where do you find those negro shacks? I've been living here for ten years, and I don't know them."

Mr. Griggs was glad that all people didn't see alike; if they did all mansions would be built on the same plan. He didn't think the mansion was so bad, and he didn't think the surroundings were bad. The nearest dwelling was that of the Call house, one of the handsomest and most historic homes in Florida, and another near neighbor was Congressman Lamar.

Mr. Reese moved to lay the amendment on the table, which was agreed to, and the bill then passed was in its original form.

### MR. KNIGHT SEES FRANCHISE BILL KILLED.

Mr. Peter Knight was an early visitor to the Senate yesterday, remaining through both morning and afternoon sessions.

The Senate behaved well.

It was pitiable, however, that when Senators Harris and Buckman were deploring that a lack of funds prevented improvement of the Capitol that Mr. Knight did not relieve their distress by suggesting to them removal of the difficulty by adoption of a franchise tax.

Perhaps Mr. Knight had a selfish motive in thus withholding the information.

Certainly he seemed to enjoy seeing the franchise tax bill beaten to death as the closing performance of the day.

### TO FORCE PROMPT PAYMENT.

Senate Passed Bill That Will Prevent Railroads Holding Up Claims.

Railway injustice got a check in the Senate yesterday. No mistake about it.

It was not through any effort of Senator Buckman that this happened.

He again proved himself the enthusiastic defender of the railroads.

Again did he see no merit in a bill for the restraint of railroad lawlessness.

Nothing but "unfairness" toward the railroads. But the bill passed.

A bill, with the intent to force railway companies to be prompt in the settlement of claims brought for damaged freight or express or overcharges, was passed with but three dissenting votes.

These were—Senators Buckman, Harris and Clarke.

The bill was by Senator Trammell, and, after calling it up, he explained its purpose.

Senator Buckman quickly declared himself in opposition, and "saw great unfairness in the bill."

He thought this was a matter for the Railroad Commission, and said that it had been strengthened with power to look after just such matters.

"We have recently passed a bill giving power to the Railroad Commission," said Mr. Buckman. "Give it more power, if necessary, and I don't care how strong you make it, but don't pass this bill."

Mr. Buckman indulged in theories and suppositions concerning the bill, relative to the hardships it would cause the railroads, declaring that "this class of legislation is bound to retract."

Mr. Buckman concluded by saying that he did not represent any of these companies, but asked for fair play on all sides.

"I don't see how the bill will work any hardship to the railroad that pays its claims promptly," said Senator Trammell. "I will say to the Senator from the Eighth that there is a reaction now, and it has been caused by railroad neglect of the people's rights."

"The people demand a remedy from the abuses from which they suffer," he continued. "This bill does not present any hardship whatever to a railroad company."

Senator Henderson endorsed the view of Senator Trammell, and said that in committee the bill was not considered harsh or unjust. He also spoke of his opposition since becoming a member of the Legislature, stating that he had no leaning toward corporations, but tried to be fair in all cases.

On roll call the vote was 26 yeas and 3 nays.

### COMMITTEE ASKS FOR INSTRUCTIONS.

Impossible to Complete Investigation of Affairs of Internal Improvement Trustees and Make Report to This Legislature.

The special Joint Investigating Committee, appointed to look into the record of the Internal Improvement Trustees yesterday submitted to the House through Mr. Carter a special report which will be the special order at 10 o'clock this morning.

The report states succinctly what has been done thus far, and sets out the impossibility of the committee to complete the investigation as contemplated in the resolution.

The report recites that the committee has employed expert accountants and the reports have been checked back to the beginning of the year 1901. The committee has been at work since April 22, and the work thus far has not included the examination of witnesses. The report sets forth that the resolution under which the joint committee was appointed requires that the investigation shall go back to the year 1855, and concludes that it will be impossible to complete the work to report to the present session of the Legislature, as provided in the resolution.

The committee, therefore, asks the Legislature what shall be done. Shall the committee proceed with the work under an extension of time, or shall it make report of its findings thus far and be dismissed.

Mr. Carter made a motion that the special report should be made the special order at 10 o'clock to-day, which was unanimously agreed to.

### SPEAKER MATTHEWS RECOVERED.

Mr. Wilson of Hernando, in the chair yesterday, read a telegram addressed to Mr. Wartmann, saying that Mr. Eugene S. Matthews had recovered from his illness and would reach Tallahassee to-day. The message came from Mrs. Matthews.

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