

# THE MORNING SUN

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## SHERMAN'S MARCH THROUGH THE TREASURY OF FLORIDA

### Former Governor William Sherman Jennings Paid a Fortune for Four Years Service as Counsel to Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund.

**Served With Equal Ease and Added Fortune  
Both Parties in a Contract Aggre-  
gating a Million of Money.**

**Drew Three Salaries from State at Same  
Time for Same Work.**

**He Got \$5,000 From the Comptroller---He Got  
\$7,140 Commissions.**

This day has been set aside by the House of Representatives to consider, as special order, the report of the Joint Commission created by the Legislature of 1907, to investigate the acts and doings of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund from 1855 to the present time.

It is therefore in order for this journal, which belongs to the people of Florida, to consider this report, the other public records, and the acts of the public servants touching thereon and relating thereto.

My reading of the record and cognizance of the acts of the Trustees enables me to say that the Administration of Governor N. B. Broward will be remembered as one of such great service to the people in his conduct of the great work of reclaiming the Everglades, that his mistakes and errors in judgment will be forgiven and forgotten.

With a determination that nothing could daunt, with a courage that no calumny could shake, with a far-seeing wisdom that no criticism could obscure and with an executive ability that no obstacle could overcome—

Governor Broward pushed the work of drainage, which he had started, to the end that it will go on to completion, and become the grandest public work ever done by any state in the history of the world—restoring a principality larger than two whole states and richer in soil than the Nile's valley.

I am also enabled to say that W. S. Jennings as Governor performed greatly for the benefit of the State when he STOPPED deeding lands to railroads having legislative grants, and began to sell the land for the people's benefit. If he had not done this there would have been no land left for Broward to drain.

I am also enabled to say that the other Trustees

servicing with Jennings and Broward gave their votes, their counsel and their aid paritotically to the great plans and purposes of the two Governors.

W. S. Jennings, Former Governor  
vs.

The Public Money of Florida.

Jennings Wins!

Verdict \$33,746.21

Time Consumed, 2 years.

Money paid to W. S. Jennings out of public treasury in 1907—

As General Counsel.....Salary	\$ 5,000.00
As General Agent..... Bonus	5,000.00
As Agents and Counsel ----Expense	1,234.26
As Lawyer in Drainage Suits -----	5,000.00

Total in 1907..... \$16,234.26

Money paid to W. S. Jennings out of public treasury in 1908—

As General Counsel.....Salary	\$5,000.00
As General Agent.....Salary	5,000.00
As Special Agent Commission.....	7,140.00
As Agent and Counsel.....Expenses	371.95

\$17,511.95

Total in 1907.....\$16,234.26

Total in 1908..... 17,511.95

Grand Total 2 years.....\$33,746.21

Whole amount of money paid to W. S. Jennings since his term as Governor expired up to 1909, was \$43,795.01.

"Once upon a time" (and this is the accepted way to begin a story) Senator Pettus of Alabama and Senator Clark of Montana were serving on the same U. S. Senate committee, having under consideration the fixing of a price for some Indian lands which were to be opened for settlement. The question before the committee was at what price the lands were to be offered to settlers by the government. Senator Clark, (he of the inexhaustible copper mines, and by virtue of which many times a millionaire) "objected to the price of one dollar per acre as proposed, emphasizing his objection by offering to give one dollar an acre then and there for all the lands, and write his check at once. Senator Pettus looked at him in open mouthed astonishment, saying, "why man, do you know there is a million and a half acres of those lands?" "Yes" said Senator Clark, "that is about what I

make it." And you will give one dollar an acre and GIVE A CHECK RIGHT NOW?" Said the veteran senator. "I will," said the Montana millionaire Senator. "Why, good Lord, man, I did not know there was so much money in the world!" exclaimed old man Pettus.

I am reminded of this story when I examine the report of the special committee to investigate the trustees of the internal improvement fund, and the minutes of the trustees covering the last four years.

From the time he went out of office as governor in January 1905 to January 1909, a period of less than four years former Governor William Sherman Jennings received the magnificent sum of \$43,795.01 out of the public funds of the state of Florida.

It is not given to many of us, certainly not to many Florida citizens, to get hold of that much money as fruit of the labors of a quarter of a century even when all of one's time is devoted to the work in hand.

Yet during the time the former governor was receiving the princely stipend of more than ten thousand dollars a year he found time to attend to their business, including a year as vice president of a million dollar banking institution with salary commensurate to his responsibility; one of the reorganizers of another banking institution, speculator in Jacksonville real estate; attorney in active practice in the Florida metropolis; candidate for member of the national Democratic committee, and participator in the deliberations of the democratic national convention by being the proxy holder of his father-in-law, and trader in Florida lands in hundred thousand acre lots.

Truly, a life of great activity, and by reason of these large and varied participations in business and political affairs, devoting but a SMALL PART OF HIS TIME during the four years to the work for which he received a fortune.

Florida has had many governors since 1845, but never so thrifty a soul as he who came from Illinois, if rumor is true behind a team of dapple greys, singing the virtues of wizard oil.

But great as was his thrift, a perusal of the minutes of the trustees and of the report of the special committee will disclose that he displayed a nimbieness in jumping from one green field to the other, while retaining his PREEMPTION ON BOTH, that would make a hungry grasshopper look like a harmless ladybug.

These records show that while he was getting a fortune from the public store house of his adopted state, he was annexing no inconsiderable part of the surplus of those who were COMPELLED TO DO BUSINESS with him alone as attorney and agent of the trustees in purchases of public land.

William Sherman Jennings, coming out of the west, blazed a new trail in legal ethics, not heretofore discovered by sleepy and reputable Florida lawyers, when with equal facility, and with great profit to himself, he served as ATTORNEY FOR BOTH SIDES in a transaction involving a million of money.

The former governor also set up a new standard, not heretofore discovered by Florida's out of date legal practitioners when he received THREE salaries of \$5 000 a year EACH for serving the SAME set of men at the SAME time in EXACTLY the SAME work.

But the fertility of resource of the Gentleman from Illinois was not impaired nor diminished, nor was his inventive power enfeebled by his sojourn amid the languid airs that blow through there sinous pine tops of his adopted State, for he discovered a new way to break into the public Treasury, and in the breaking look the sheriff calmly in the eye. He sold some land to some of his acquaintances and received commissions for the selling during this year of 1908, amounting to the neat and nifty sum of \$7,140.

The balance of the \$17,511.95 of the public money delivered into the far reaching hands of the gentleman with the disagreeable middle name, came under the head of expenses.

Dates are said to be bothersome things, but it is necessary

[Continued on 2nd page.]