

REPORT  
OF THE  
COMMISSIONER OF LANDS AND IMMIGRATION.

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, January 1, 1879.

To His Excellency GEORGE F. DREW, Governor of Florida:

SIR—I have the honor to submit my report as Commissioner of Lands and Immigration for the two years ending December 31, 1878.

LAND SALES.

During the period covered by this report the sales of lands have been as follows: School Lands, 6,284.73 acres for \$7,964.97; Seminary Lands, 202.16 acres for \$365.66; Swamp and Overflowed Lands, 84,149.39 acres for \$69,234.18; Internal Improvement Lands, 15,719.32 acres for \$20,290.32;—making an aggregate of 106,355.60 acres sold, for which the sum of \$97,855.13 has been received.

This is an advance upon the record of the two years previous, and may be taken as reliable evidence that the demand for lands for settlement has not abated.

STATE SELECTIONS.

During the past two years no patents or approvals of lands selected for the State have been received from the General Government. Under contract with the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, and appointment by the Governor, Williams and Swann selected for the State, as swamp and overflowed lands, 2,312,513.91 acres; and under a similar contract in 1873, Williams, Swann and Corley selected 1,552,098.63 acres—making altogether 3,864,612.54 acres. Of these selections, 896,915 acres were approved in 1876, but since that time no further approvals have been made, and the lands so approved have not been patented. In addition to the above selections, the State has a claim for a large quantity of land selected by Randolph and Wells prior to 1861, and a claim against the General Government, under the acts of Congress of 1855 and 1857, for indemnity for swamp lands sold by the United States after the passage of the act of September 28, 1850. The adjustment of these claims is of more importance to the State than the value of the lands themselves. So long as the State selections are neither approved nor rejected, the lands are not subject to entry either in the State or United States Land

Office. Nothing will work more injuriously to deter immigration than uncertainty with respect to the title to lands, and settlers are naturally unwilling to settle and improve lands until they can own them. While the lands in question are subject to overflow and require drainage, nevertheless a considerable portion of them need so small an expenditure of labor or money for that purpose, that they offer great inducement for settlement by persons desirous of securing a home below the region of damaging frost, and engaging in the cultivation of tropical fruits. The southern part of the State, where these lands are located, has recently attracted a larger immigration than any other section, except along the railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Keys, and it is desirable that no obstacles should be in the way of extending the settlements as far as the lands are available.

The Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund have tried to remove some of the difficulties alluded to, by allowing pre-emptions to actual settlers upon any of the unconfirmed State selections, whereby the pre-emptor is assured of a right to secure his improvements when the land is approved to the State, and many persons have taken advantage of this privilege, but a mere inchoate right, with an uncertainty when it may be consummated, contingent upon the action of the authorities at Washington, although the best that can be given under the circumstances, is not of such a satisfactory character as will materially aid in developing the country.

But while, as above stated, a considerable quantity of these lands can be rendered available for agricultural purposes with but little labor and expense, this is not true with respect to the great bulk of these selections. They comprise a great part of the Everglades and the swamps and savannas on both sides of the Kissimmee river and Lake Okeechobee, embracing millions of acres of overflowed land which cannot be reclaimed in detail. The work of draining this immense body of land will require the investment of a large amount of capital, and the compensation must be from the lands themselves. The United States cannot use the lands for that purpose because they have been granted to the State, and the State cannot well conclude such an arrangement until her title is defined and perfected by patent.

The State is deeply interested in having some work done which will either partially or wholly drain this basin. Even partial drainage would carry off the superfluous water which, in rainy seasons, overflows much of the country otherwise desirable for settlement. And if the drainage should be accomplished by constructing navigable canals into Lake Okeechobee and deepening the channels of the outlets from Lakes Kis-

simmee and Tohopetalaga, it would reclaim some of the best lands in the State for the production of cane, rice, and tropical fruits, and at the same time furnish facilities for their shipment. No enterprise can be successfully undertaken for the reclamation of these lands until the question of title is adjusted, and until then this district of country must remain, as now, an overflowed uninhabited waste.

The cause assigned officially for the delay in the adjustment of these land claims is the insufficiency of the clerical force in the General Land Office to keep up with the constant press of current business. In the report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office for the year ending June 30, 1877, (the latest I have been able to see,) he says in reference to the adjustment of the swamp land grants:

"The provisions of the law have not been fully carried out, nor have the grants to the several States been adjusted. Lapse of time make the adjustment more difficult. Many States are demanding their rights under the act, and at the present rate of settlement years must elapse before the swamp and indemnity lands can be ascertained. \* \* \* \* There remains of the approved lands 3,392,048.68 acres to be patented, and of the selected lands 16,367,690.17 acres remain to be approved and patented.

"Under existing regulations of the department these lands, which are distributed among the States from Florida to Oregon, must be examined in the field before approval. Many years must elapse before this can be done, unless Congress will appropriate money for a larger clerical force. I have but one agent in the field, and have to pay his expenses out of the contingent fund of the bureau. There should be at least forty efficient men engaged on this work. The extent of the grant should be ascertained at the earliest possible date, and the lands passing under the grant should be conveyed to the several States."

The reclamation and development of this part of the State is more important to the people than any sum of money that might be received from their sale, and if, as the Commissioner says, years must elapse before the claims can be adjusted and the lands rendered subject to sale, it is better that they had never been granted to the State. If the cause of delay is the insufficiency of the clerical force in the Land Department at Washington, our delegation in Congress should be requested to use their influence to remove the cause by voting for such an appropriation for clerk hire in the General Land Office as the business of that office may require, and thus enable the State to realize the benefits intended by the act of Congress of September 28, 1850.

There are also other considerations that make it important to the State that the General Land Office should not be embarrassed in the transaction of the current business, which although they have no direct bearing upon the duties of this office, I think it proper to refer to on account of their effect upon immigration and public convenience. On the 22d June, 1876, Congress passed an act providing that the public lands in the Southern States should be offered at public sale, and thereafter be subject to private entry, but notwithstanding the lapse of two years and a half none of the lands in Florida have been offered except those lying in the original Newnansville District. In this State where so large an area is valuable chiefly for the timber, it is desirable that entries should not be confined to settlers under the homestead and pre-emption laws, that the legitimate lumber business be encouraged, and that no pretext be left for trespassing upon the public domain. And even where agricultural lands can only be entered under the homestead law, the restriction operates injuriously and leads to a demoralizing laxness in construing the affidavits required on final proof. The prompt decision of many cases arising under the land laws is essential to the rapid development of the country. The delay which frequently occurs in procuring the cancellation of entries made by homestead speculators under their own names or those of associates, not as their oaths declare, for the purpose of settlement and cultivation, but to exact a premium from honest settlers, is a serious injury to our citizens and an encouragement to unprincipled men. And so in other questions arising under the laws regulating the sale of the public lands.

#### TAX LANDS.

During the years 1877 and 1878, there have been sold at this office of the lands bought in by the State for taxes and held subject to sale under the act of February 27, 1872, a quantity yielding \$1,012.44, which amount has been paid over to the State Treasurer for the benefit of the School Fund. I respectfully call attention to "An act in reference to lands bought in for the State for Taxes," approved December 14, 1861, (Chapter 1274,) "An act to quiet Tax Titles to Lands," approved February 27, 1872, (Chapter 1865,) and "An act to provide for the redemption of lands sold for taxes," approved March 7, 1877, (Chapter 2084). The act of December 14, 1861, provides that in case of a failure to redeem the lands bought in by the State for taxes within two years, the former owner shall be "forever barred and precluded from all right of redeeming the same, and the title of the State shall become indefeasible thereto," and authorizes the appraisal of the unredeemed lands, and their sale at the appraised valuation, and the subdivision of large

tracts into smaller lots, &c. The political condition of the country subsequent to the passage of said act, rendered it impolitic to enforce the provisions concerning the appraisal and sale of the lands, and consequently nothing was done under said act. The act of 1872, revived for a limited period the right of redemption of the former owner, and provided for the sale thereafter of lands not redeemed in accordance with said last named act. The later act does not in express terms repeal the former, but being inconsistent with each other I have considered the act of 1861, no longer in force. Nevertheless, it has been insisted by interested parties, that the act of 1861 is in force and unrepealed. The act of 1877 provides "that all persons whose lands have heretofore been sold for taxes and purchased by the State or any county, shall be authorized and allowed to redeem the same" upon certain terms, and that the lands not redeemed shall be sold and the proceeds paid into the State and County Treasuries.

The construction placed by this office upon the last named act, was that it did not apply to lands offered for sale by the Commissioner of Lands and Immigration in 1872, under the law of that year, and since held subject to sale in the State Land Office, but only to the lands certified to the Comptroller since 1871, and which were subject to sale or redemption in that office; but others expressed the opinion that the act of 1877, again revived the right of redemption in the original owners, of all lands at any time heretofore bought in by the State for taxes, where the State's title had not been transferred, and repealed by implication the act of 1872. If this construction of the statute is correct, the Legislature has withdrawn from the Common School Fund the proceeds of the sale of lands bought in by the State for taxes prior to 1871, which had been granted to said Fund by the Second Section of the act of December 31, 1850, (Chapter 361,) and transferred the same to the State and County Treasuries, an effect which I am confident was not intended by the Legislature. I respectfully suggest a repeal of the act of 1861, or the passage of a law embodying such of the features of the acts of 1861 and 1872 as it is desirable to continue in force, and the enactment of such law declaratory of the act of 1877 as will insure to the School Fund the benefits granted by the act of 1850.

#### SUPERSEDED STATUTES.

In view of the fact that the Legislature has directed the preparation of a Digest of the Laws of the State, I desire to call the attention of your Excellency and the Legislature to certain laws relating to the sale and disposal of State lands and otherwise appertaining to my office, which have never been expressly

repealed, but have been superseded and are not in force and therefore should be repealed and no longer incumber the statute books, and others which need modification to suit them to changes that have taken place since their enactment. Among these are the acts regulating the sale and pre-emption of State lands.

The lands of the State (except those bought in for taxes which are disposed of under special statutes) consist of the Internal Improvement lands, swamp and overflowed lands, school lands and Seminary lands. While these lands were under the charge of the Register of Public Lands, to be disposed of under such rules and regulations as the Legislature might prescribe, many acts were passed regulating sales and pre-emption; but by the act of January 6, 1855, entitled "An act to provide for and encourage a liberal system of Internal Improvements in this State," the Internal Improvement lands and the swamp lands were vested in the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, with power to sell and transfer said lands, fix the price, and allow pre-emptions under such rules and regulations as they may deem advisable. Under the act passed January 3, 1869, entitled "An act to establish a uniform system of Common Schools, and a University," the State Board of Education is directed and empowered "to obtain the possession of, and take the charge, management and oversight of all lands granted to or held by the State for educational purposes, and to fix the terms of sale, rental or use of said lands," &c. Thus by these two acts all the State lands were placed in charge of these two Boards, and the various statutes regulating the disposal of said lands became inoperative. I therefore recommend the repeal of the following acts:

An act for the relief of settlers on public lands and to grant pre-emption rights in certain cases, approved January 7, 1848, (Chapter 163.)

An act to grant pre-emption rights to settlers on State lands, approved December 27, 1848, (Chapter 234.)

An act to amend an act to grant pre-emption rights to settlers on State lands, approved December 27, 1848, approved January 20, 1851, (Chapter 348.)

An act to amend an act entitled an act to grant pre-emption rights to settlers on State lands, approved December 27, 1848, approved December 31, 1852, (Chapter 499.)

An act to amend the law granting pre-emption rights on State lands, approved January 5, 1853, (Chapter 498.)

An act to protect actual settlers and cultivators on State lands in this State, approved December 27, 1876, (Chapter 786.)

An act to authorize the Register to sell (16th) Sections in certain cases, approved December 22, 1856, (Chapter 802.)

An act to grant the right of pre-emption to persons who have settled on Sixteenth Sections in certain cases, approved January 6, 1851, (Chapter 349.)

An act to make uniform the mode of selling State lands, approved January 20, 1851, (Chapter 345.)

An act to repeal an act entitled an act to require purchasers of State lands to make payment therefor to the Treasurer of the State and for other purposes, approved January 5, 1853, (Chapter 500.)

The pre-emption laws embraced in the foregoing list only extended that right to settlers upon lands which had not been brought into market, and for ninety days thereafter. A similar privilege is now extended to settlers under the regulations of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund.

An act to provide for the payment of the salary, travelling and other expenses of the Register of Public Lands out of the public moneys in his hands, approved January 12, 1849, (Chapter 238,) and an act relative to the examination of the office of Register of Public Lands, approved January 6, 1849, (Chapter 240,) might as well be repealed. The former is not applicable to the office as now constituted, and the purposes of the latter can be accomplished at any session by a joint resolution of both Houses or a motion in each House.

An act to require the Register of State Lands to furnish Clerks of the Circuit Courts with a list of all lands subject to private entry in the several counties of this State where any of said lands lie, and for other purposes, approved January 7, 1853, (Chapter 502,) should be repealed, as the provisions are substantially re-enacted by an act to provide for a correct list of the owners of real property in the several counties of this State, approved August 6, 1868, (Chapter 1658.) The original lists furnished by the Register under the first named act have probably been lost or misplaced in most of the counties, and if preserved are not of much value now. The counties are supposed to have the plats prepared by the Surveyor General under the act of 1868, but I have been informed they are generally unreliable. A correct list of all the State lands in each county with the names of the purchasers of all that have been sold, would be of material assistance to the Tax Assessor in making their assessments and would increase the revenue in many counties. I had intended to prepare such lists, but found it impossible to do so on account of the constant pressure of current business. A list of the State lands would be a public convenience, but the description should be in the smallest legal subdivision so that in case of sale a note thereof might be entered opposite the tract; and such a list of the entire State lands would be a laborious work. Lists of all the entries,

however, could be more easily made out and are of more importance on account of their relation to the collection of revenue. Such lists, however, cannot be prepared in time for this year's assessment without employing another clerk temporarily, unless the pressure of official business should be removed, of which I have no fear.

An act more effectually to protect our citizens residing on State lands along the State line, approved January 15, 1859, (Ch. 924) has practically expired, the duties therein devolved upon the Register having been discharged, and the exclusive right to purchase therein given to settlers having been exercised.

An act to secure homesteads to actual settlers upon the swamp and overflowed lands of the State of Florida, approved February 16, 1872, (Ch. 1866) was passed by the Legislature for the purpose of rendering the swamp lands subject to entry on terms similar to those prescribed in the homestead act of Congress; but the right to fix the terms of sale of these lands having been transferred to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund by the act of January 6, 1855, this law was inoperative. It could only amount to a recommendation to the Trustees to adopt the terms and provisions therein set forth, and if that body had so done their force would have been derived from the action of the Board of Trustees and not from that of the Legislature. Upon consultation, however, the Trustees refused to adopt the provisions of the act. The act has misled many persons, as is shown by letters addressed to this office, and it should be repealed on that account as well as its invalidity.

#### SEAL OF OFFICE.

An act to require the Register of Public Lands to procure and keep a seal of office, approved December 31, 1852, (Ch. 503) was passed for the purpose indicated in the title, and enacts that "the impression of said seal upon any deed purporting to have been made by the Register, or his deputy, shall entitle the same to record in the office appointed by law for the record of deeds in each and every county of this State." This law I suppose to be sufficient to entitle any deed to record executed by the Commissioner of Lands and Immigration and attested by said seal, but I call the attention of your Excellency and the Legislature to this act for the reason that the deeds executed by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund since January, 1855, and by the members of the Board of Education since 1869, have been attested by the seal of the Florida State Land Office, and doubts have been expressed by many persons, some of them learned in the law, as to the validity of the deeds so executed without witnesses. So far as I am aware

the question has not been brought before the courts for adjudication, and it is not my purpose to express any opinion upon the subject, but as doubts have been expressed as to the validity of such deeds, and as any judicial decision not allowing them to be offered as evidence of title would be a serious embarrassment to the public by unsettling the custom of more than twenty years, I recommend that an act be passed declaring legal the use of said seal for the purpose of attesting deeds executed by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund and Board of Education conveying the lands respectively under their charge.

#### COUNTY BOUNDARIES.

I recommend the passage of an act defining the boundaries of the counties. Very few of the counties retain their original boundaries, and changes have been made at nearly every session of the Legislature. A digest of the laws fixing the boundaries must embrace all these different changes, and a reference to Bush's Digest will show how difficult it is to define the true limits of many counties amid the complication of amendments. For instance, the act organizing Hillsborough county bounds it on the north by Alachua county, east by Mosquito (now Orange) county, south by Monroe county, and west by the Gulf of Mexico. That act has not been repealed nor amended, except by implication, but the boundaries have been changed by organizing new counties until the western boundary alone remains as in the original act. In order then to define Hillsborough county reference must be made to the acts organizing Hernando, Polk, and Manatee and the various amendments thereto. Similar remarks would apply to most of the other counties.

#### IMMIGRATION.

Under the act to create and organize a Bureau of Immigration, approved February 6, 1877, the Commissioner of Lands and Immigration, Attorney-General, and Comptroller, met and organized the Board February 16. In August of that year, Hon. Charles H. DuPont, of Gadsden county, was appointed Traveling Immigration Agent to visit the Northern and Northwestern States. Judge DuPont entered at once upon his mission and visited several of the Northwestern States, but died in Minnesota before he had been engaged in the work long enough to accomplish much for the benefit of the State. From the familiar knowledge of the State acquired by residence here since his youth, and from the influence he everywhere wielded by reason of his sterling character, untiring zeal and intellectual acquirements, the Board had reason to believe that if any man could accomplish anything towards inducing settlement

from the older States by a truthful recital of our natural resources, Judge DuPont was the man for the work, and the news of his death was a serious disappointment of our hopes.

After the death of Judge DuPont, the Board considered that it was then too late to employ another traveling agent for the year 1877, and decided to use the remainder of the appropriation for that year in disseminating printed information respecting the State. The supply of the "Florida Settler" was exhausted, and the preparation of another descriptive pamphlet was at first thought most desirable, but on account of the difficulty of getting one prepared and published it was concluded to adopt the "Florida Immigrant" for distribution, and the Board assumed the subscription to said paper made by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund. Under this arrangement there have been distributed throughout the country, at an expense considerably less than printing and distributing a pamphlet, some 16,000 copies of the several issues of the paper during the past eighteen months, no two copies going to one address during a year. This number added to the number circulated by the publisher will make an estimated total of some 30,000 copies of the paper of the different monthly issues which have found their way into the hands of as many readers. Copies of the different issues are preserved and distributed from time to time in special cases to those who desire information concerning particular specified localities. The several counties have, with few exceptions, been well represented in the publication of descriptive articles written by trustworthy and prominent citizens, and the different sections of the State have been impartially and fully represented.

In March, 1878, the Board determined to employ a traveling Immigration Agent for that year and selected Mr. Haley T. Blocker for that position, agreeing to pay him for six months services, beginning on the first of June, at the rate of \$200 per month, out of which he should defray his traveling expenses. Mr. Blocker accepted the appointment, and in the discharge of his duties visited Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan, and I believe labored earnestly and faithfully for the interests of the State. His reports from time to time were encouraging, and I trust that his efforts will result in much good.

The whole amount of the appropriation for the year 1877 (\$1,500) was withdrawn from the Treasury under the order of the Board of Immigration, and of this sum the amount of \$1,429.46 was expended in payment to the Immigration Agent and to subscription to the "Florida Immigrant," leaving an unexpended balance in my hands of \$60.54, as will appear by reference to my account with the Immigration Fund appended to this report. Of the \$1,500 appropriated for 1878 only \$1,200

was withdrawn from the Treasury to pay the salary of the Immigration Agent for that year, leaving an unexpended balance of \$300 in the Treasury.

An act to provide for the organization of a Bureau of Immigration, approved February 1, 1869, (Ch. 1685) was passed when the office of Commissioner of Immigration was distinct from that of the Surveyor-General, and the powers and duties therein prescribed are not appropriate to this office as now constituted, and said act is in conflict with the act of 1877. I therefore recommend its repeal.

The laws make no provision for obtaining statistical information; it is impossible to state exactly the extent of immigration during the past two years. The largely increased sales of State lands during that period, and information received from individuals and through the press, of sales by individuals and companies in those parts of the State where the available public lands have been already entered, indicate that there has been a steady increase of population by immigration from other parts of the United States. The largest increase has been along the line of the railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Keys, owing to the efforts of the parties controlling the lands formerly belonging to the railroad company, and in the counties of South Florida bordering on the Gulf. Taking the State as a whole, it may be said that, while the number of new settlers is not as great as we would wish, it is nevertheless encouraging. It is useless to deny that certain causes have operated to prevent many persons from coming to Florida, who otherwise would have done so. Of these, the principal arise from misapprehension, or a want of information on the part of the intending settler; others from outside circumstances beyond our control; while others lie at our own door.

Among the first class I will only allude to the impression created by the prevalence of yellow fever in one or two of our ports in 1877, and in many parts of the South in 1878. Letters addressed to this office will show an apprehension was felt by many in the North that Florida could not be visited during the fall of either year without risk of that disease. The fact was not known that a large portion of the State is a safe refuge from that infection. Among the extraneous circumstances affecting immigration may be mentioned the shrinkage of value of real estate in the Northern States. The class of citizens that we most particularly desire to invite are farmers with a small capital. Many such persons are prevented from moving because they are unable to dispose of their property at home for a fair price, and will wait until prices are higher or until they get accustomed to the present rate of values. The drawbacks upon immigration for which we are responsible are partly a

failure to furnish full and reliable information respecting the advantages of the State for settlement, and partly to disappointment of settlers and visitors by the untruthful statements of irresponsible men. Every man who is deceived and returns disappointed will exert an influence against us.

But it is not so important to know the hindrances to the settlement of our State, as to devise the means for promoting it. How best to induce immigration to Florida is a question wherein a great difference of opinion exists among men of judgment, and will depend very greatly upon the amount which can be appropriated for that purpose by the Legislature. If the State can afford the expense, it would perhaps be well to have an agent in Europe to engage emigrants there and forward them to New York; another agent in New York to receive them there and put them on the right road to Florida; and another here to locate them properly. Traveling and local agents might be employed in other States, and descriptive pamphlets, circulars, &c., distributed throughout the country. With an expenditure sufficiently large for the above-named purpose, and with judicious selection of the agents, I doubt not the State would be repaid in an unprecedented stream of immigration.

If all this cannot be done, then the question to consider is, what can be done and how much? It is the belief of many that the most effective mode of encouraging immigration with a small expenditure would be to establish an immigration agency in New York, and place it in charge of a person familiar with European customs and languages, for the purpose of diverting to Florida a part of the foreign emigrants, who are now sent principally to the Western States. Such agent would be expected to operate in Europe, through correspondents there, and to take the necessary steps in New York to induce the emigrants to proceed to Florida. This plan is the one recommended to the Legislature at the last session by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, but failed to meet the approval of that body. The expense at that time was estimated at \$1,500 per annum, but the efficiency of the agency would be increased by the outlay of \$500 more in procuring maps, diagrams and descriptive notes for general or special information. Such agent would not, of course, confine his efforts exclusively to emigrants from Europe, but would be prepared to set forth the advantages of Florida to all inquirers and make his office an official medium for conveying to the Northern public a knowledge of our resources.

Others believe that our efforts should be directed exclusively to bringing in settlers from the other States, and that a traveling agent and local agents should be employed to call the attention of the Northern people to our State, and furnish them

with all the information required to attract their attention. It is alleged that agents from the Western States, appointed by the States or by Railroad or land Companies are everywhere calling attention to their particular localities, and that Florida should enter the field and contend for a part of the surplus population of the more crowded States. To carry out this plan will require an appropriation of \$1,200 or \$1,500 a year to pay the salary and expenses of the agents.

But, whatever policy may be adopted, it is certain that some way should be provided for disseminating information respecting the State in a more convenient and satisfactory form than by manuscript letters from this office. Any agents that may be appointed, whether traveling or local, must have printed information to distribute. I believe that the pamphlets printed and distributed by my predecessors have accomplished a great deal towards bringing settlers into the State, and a new edition or a new pamphlet should be prepared and published. It is not necessary that any such publication should contain anything new or original respecting the general features of the State. Enough has been written, and well written, concerning Florida to furnish material for a compilation or selection that will supply all necessary information. In fact, a little judicious pruning would be advisable. A volume about half the size of the "Florida Settler" would be convenient for distribution and might be extracted from the "Settler" and "Florida Immigrant." The great deficiency is the lack of statistical information which should be embraced in any official descriptive work of the kind. Many inquiries are addressed to this office upon the supposition that certain data are accessible here, when the State records furnish nothing upon the subject. Estimates based upon anything but official information carry no weight. For mortality statistics every publisher has to go back for years. For any other we can only refer to the last (or next to the last) United States census. Could a table be furnished showing the quantity of the different articles of export and consumption produced annually in the different counties, it would remove the misapprehensions of many who have received their impressions of Florida from tourists and travelers, and believe that the whole State is suited only to orange culture and boarding-houses. While we are indebted to many visitors and correspondents of the press, who come here for the purpose of seeking and imparting information, for truthful accounts of the various sections of the State, and who have thereby attracted the attention of many others to our country, one need only travel a day in the winter in company with passengers from other parts of the Union and hear their comments upon the characteristics of this State to learn how unreliable would be the in-

formation communicated by the average traveler. A compilation showing the resources of the several counties, the products of the farm, the garden, the orchard and vineyard, &c.; the stock and everything indicating the condition and progress of agriculture and other industries, would not only remove the erroneous impressions of the stranger, but might enlighten not a few of our own citizens. Whether information of this character can be obtained and compiled in time for any future publication will depend upon the action of the Legislature.

While a pamphlet containing a general description of the State, and such information as will meet the inquiries usually made by intending settlers, is important to a State desiring to encourage immigration, I do not think it should supersede the publication of the *Florida Immigrant*. A newspaper published at stated intervals will supplement a pamphlet by supplying any omission therein, by answering inquiries suggested thereby, by recounting the progress and improvements in the different sections, by giving current items of interest, by noticing new enterprises, and by enabling each locality to call public attention to its own peculiar advantages.

I have not made an estimate of the cost of such a pamphlet as is recommended above, as that can be easily ascertained by conferring with any publisher, and will depend upon the size, style and execution of the work. The cost of the subscription for 1,000 copies of the *Florida Immigrant* for the past year has been \$62.50 per month, not including postage.

Whatever plan for immigration purposes may be adopted, it will be impossible to know certainly the exact result. We can never ascertain positively how far we are indebted to any particular means used for inducing settlement. Many take up their homes in our State from having their attention called to it by some trifling circumstance or accidental remark, without themselves knowing what originated the first impulse, and large results may oftentimes be ascribed to certain causes which really had no influence in that direction. We can the most surely look for success by employing all the means in our power.

As allusion has been made to the efforts of other States to secure immigrants, and as attention is called to this by every person who writes or talks upon the subject of immigration, I will not dismiss this topic without referring to one very great aid that the Western States have in this respect, and that is, the influence of the railroad companies who own large quantities of land. These companies offer double inducements to settlers. In the first place, by the construction of their roads they furnish facilities for transportation which enhance the value of the adjacent lands. In the second place, they make

the terms of sale favorable to the settler, and establish lower rates for passage and for the carriage of his household goods. They are also doubly interested in securing settlers upon their lands; first, for the price of the lands; and secondly, the increased freights resulting from the settlement and cultivation of the lands. With these advantages and incentives they have their agents in all the older States, and extend their influence beyond the seas, and accomplish more to fill up the country with immigrants than the States themselves can do. Every liberal land grant to a railroad company controlled by men of intelligence and sagacity, is a powerful agent for the development of the country through which the road is built. We have in the State of Florida lands that offer as great inducements for settlement as any in the world, except for the great drawback that they are comparatively inaccessible. If we could continue our railroad lines westward to Pensacola and southward to Tampa and Charlotte Harbor, there need be no immigration agents or descriptive circulars to fill up the waste places in those sections.

Very respectfully,

HUGH A. CORLEY,

Commissioner of Lands and Immigration.