SUBJECTS TO BE PRESENTED AT THE PUBLIC HEARING ON LOCAL WATER POLLUTION AT THE ORLANDO C. OF C. BUILDING MONDAY NOVEMBER 14, 1966. BY ARTHUR W. (JIMMIE) SINCLAIR, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY-MGR., WINTER GARDEN C. OF C.

SUBJECTS — APPROX. TIME Total-5 minutes

The major contributing factors to the muck condition in Lake Apopka are:

1. The muck and farm residues pumped from the Muck Farms into Lake Apopka since 1941 is one of the major factors.

2. The water hyancith eradication program conducted since 1950 by Counties and U.S. Engineers, etc., has sent several hundreds and perhaps thousands of tons of the hyanciths to the bottom of the lake. Due to the fiber type substance of this water plant it is suspected that the decaying aspects will take many, many years, if ever.

3. Natural wash from the surrounding terrain.

The major contributing factors to the over fertilization of Lake Apopka are:

1. Farm residue from the Muck Farms.

2. Leeching from the Citrus Groves surrounding the lake.

Summary: The State Legislature passed a bill in 1941 authorizing the Zellwood Drainage District in which the present Muck Farms was established. Funds to establish the Muck Farms was provided by RFC, a division of our Federal Government. When the Muck Farms was established nearly 9,000 acres of Lake Apopka was taken into the farms. Since the operation of these farms, they have carried on a continous pumping operation depositing the muck and farm residue in Lake Apopka. The sinking of the hyanciths sponsored by the U.S. Engineers has also been a serious contribution of the muck condition. The U.S. Engineers granted the Muck Farm interests permission to deepen the Beauclair Canal in 1950-51 which lowered the water level of Lake Apopka to a critical level resulting in several large fish kills that helped pollute the lake and reduce the game fish population in the lake.

Recommendations:

Since the State of Florida and the Federal Government were both responsible for the establishment of the Muck Farms and providing federal funds for development and because of these factors and the fact that neither the State or Federal Government and the U.S. Engineers made no provisions to prevent the serious damages, we strongly recommend that the State of Florida and our Federal Goverment jointly work out an agreement to have the U.S. Engineers to make an engineering study and cost factors to clean up and restore Lake Apopka to a good desireable fishing, boating, and recreational lake that it was prior to 1941. We further suggest that these plans be worked out as to not seriously effect the present Muck Farms Industry and the Citrus Industry. We recommend that catch basins be established in the low lands near the Muck Farms to catch and filter out the muck and residue pumped from the farm areas. We recommend that similar basins be established at various areas on the shore lines to pump some of the existing muck from the bottom of the lake. We recommend that a buffer strip of a vigorous vegetation be established between the Citrus Groves and the lake waters as a means to absorb a percentage of the leeching of the fertilizers and to help stop the flow of soils and residues caused by heavy rains.

Conclusion:

As an immediate measure to rid Lake Apopka of the infested Garfish population, to improve the Game Fish population, and to help improve fishing, we recommend that a twelve month seining project be carried on similar to the recent test seining operation sponsored by Orange County and the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.