

The unique business methods Carl had used in his home state he transplanted to this jungle. The men who worked with him have told of the various means he used to stimulate their imagination and activities.

Carl offered a fifty-dollar prize for the best suggestion for the betterment of the organization. A young man named Pete Chase had joined the office force, and Pete, knowing there was no one on the job checking the depth of fill, suggested a man for that purpose, having in mind his engineer friend, Tom Ringwood. The day the suggestion box was opened Carl sent for Pete. "Your suggestion was a good one, but why in hell didn't you finish it—have you a man in mind for the job?" Pete told him of Tom. "How much is he getting now? Tell him I'll give him less, but if he makes good I'll give him twice as much. And say, you won—here's your fifty-dollar check."

Tom Ringwood made good. Later Carl informed Pete his suggestion had proven so valuable that, on top of the prize money, his monthly check would be increased fifty dollars.

There was a desperate period during the preliminary work of building the land to hold the foundations of a city yet unborn. Jim Allison came down to look over the undertaking. He left with a doubtful warning for Carl. "Don't go on with it. It's too big a job for any one man." The curious natives crossed the wooden bridge to watch Carl Fisher's mad project in action. They went away shaking their heads. "That man Fisher is sinking his millions in mud."

One of the old-time Floridians summed up the general opinion in a complaint to a local banker. "Do you have to be a damn fool to make money? A fellow named Fisher is pumping tons of sand into a swamp, when there are already millions of solid acres in Florida nobody is using." "Crazy Carl Fisher" were words I heard again. It did seem mad to pour a fortune into making more Florida land, when so much was already going to waste. The jungle itself seemed to protest in every way possible against this intrusion by man. Malaria, mosquitoes and lack of water fought invasion. But Carl had started something, and it was not easy for him to give up.

For my part, I forgot any early reservations and shared Carl's faith in the place. It had to succeed! All his resources, physical as well as financial, were being poured into that steaming morass.

Disaster followed disaster. Carl's answer was to sign more checks, to go himself to the fill, pitch in and work with the men. He encouraged them, he talked with them. He knew them all. Late at night Carl and I would cross the bay again to the Beach and walk out on the pipe lines with big baskets of sandwiches and pots of coffee for the men who kept great dredges throbbing through the night.

For a year and a half the dredges continued their noisy nibbling at the rim of Biscayne Bay. Through all the disasters and setbacks Carl kept them going. He knew now that what he had started as a play project to fill his winter vacations had run away with him. The building of the land alone would cost millions.

Knowing that, but still indomitable, Carl started building on that uncertain land an office for himself, a hotel that would be known as the Lincoln Hotel, and our own sprawling white home on the edge of the sea that we called the second Shadows. Blinding white coral from the reefs was crushed for the foundation of Lincoln Road, the street first cut through the mangroves.

During that year and a half the money was poured out as if into the sea. Once Carl said, discussing the terrible cost involved, "When you get hold of a bull by the tail and he's going downhill, you can't let go."

All this time, all this investing, and not a dollar back in return, not a foot of land sold!

Slowly the bottom of the bay was pumped and poured over the jungle marsh. Slowly the age-old mangrove swamps disappeared under the layer of sand that had been brought from the bottom of Biscayne Bay. Seven hundred man-made acres of level whiteness lay over the land where not a blade of swamp grass nor a tree was left alive. Nothing but sand glittered there under the Florida sun.

For six months it lay idle, purified by sun and rain. To the eye, it seemed evanescent as snow. But under it, firmly upholding this new land, lay ageless coral as solid as the future Carl planned for Miami Beach.