

STATEMENT OF UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JOHN A. CARVER, JR., BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS, IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 908, H.R. 5395, AND S. 60, BILLS TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO DESIGNATE THE NEZ PERCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK IN THE STATE OF IDAHO, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, MARCH 22, 1965.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee:

The bill before you this morning is the third park proposal upon which I have appeared, in about as many weeks. My interest in it is special.

This modest proposal, modest in terms of the Federal appropriation commitment, and modest in land area, constitutes, nevertheless, a most significant innovation in park proposals.

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, in November 1963, endorsed an imaginative new concept of historic preservation. A proposal which contemplates the administration of several Federally owned areas by the National Park Service, complemented by the cooperative interpretation of a number of other historic sites located in the Nez Perce region owned and administered by various Federal, State and local agencies, the Nez Perce Indian Tribe, and private organizations and individuals, does indeed present a new concept.

Those who know the area, and I am one of them, can testify as to the wealth of history concentrated in this relatively small geographical area -- history of the Lewis-Clark expedition, the fur trade, gold mining, logging, missionary activity, and Indian history including the story of the classic armed conflict between the Nez Percés under Chief Joseph, and the United States.

Congressman White, Governor Smylie, Lewiston Tribune Editor Bill Johnston, and other witnesses can give these details. What thrills me, governmentally, is the concept itself -- the concept of accommodation of patterns of private land ownership, multi-agency administration, cooperation of Federal, State and local governments, and leadership by private citizens motivated by a sense of history.

The Nez Perce National Historical Park would actually involve 22 separate sites in the northern Idaho "panhandle" together with certain scenic easements around them -- easements to prevent destruction of historic and scenic values by signs or incompatible developments.

Only the most significant 3 of the 22 sites would necessarily be in direct ownership and control of the National Park Service. The remaining 19 might remain in the ownership of the U. S. Forest Service, the State of Idaho, its political subdivisions, the Nez Perce Indian Tribe, or private individuals. However, the bill makes possible the utilization of the National Park Service's proficiency in the techniques of interpreting historic, scenic and other outstanding features. This interpretive proficiency, gained during decades of experience in all types of areas, will be made available on a cooperative basis to the agencies administering these other sites.

While this would be essentially a historical park of great interest it nonetheless is exciting country of great scenic beauty. There are innumerable opportunities for all kinds of outdoor recreation in the area. The countryside remains much as it was in frontier days. I my-

self know the area very well: The scenic beauty of its clear free rivers, its mountain slopes, and canyon walls, forests and broad open prairies; the richness of its history; and the intense interest and support of the citizens of this proposal. In 1963 I had an opportunity to revisit this Nez Perce country in company with historians and National Park officials to study these proposals for preserving and interpreting an area of truly national significance.

The Lewis and Clark Highway opens the region to transcontinental traffic. In these beautiful surroundings with the help of trained personnel and appropriate exhibits and interpretation our people can learn the true story of an important period in the history of our country.

This proposal has virtually no opposition. There is wide and enthusiastic support from the local people, from the Governor and other State officials, from the Indian tribe, and historical associations assuring the fullest cooperation. The initiative on this proposal was local, arising from a concern for preserving the rich heritage of the area. The Nez Perce Tribe is particularly enthusiastic as it will interpret its cultural heritage and will offer opportunities for the economic development of the Tribe and its members residing in the area.

Director Hartzog of the National Park Service is here with his staff to explain the proposal in detail.

We recommend enactment.

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