

Interior 'Sympathizes' With Measure Turning Over Forests, Grazing Lands

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Mail Tribune Correspondent
Washington — The Interior Department has informed Congress that it is in "sympathy with the objectives" of legislation designed to turn over federal forests and grazing lands to local private interests or the states. Interior's views were expressed by Assistant Secretary for Public Land Management, Wesley A. D'Ewart, in a report on a bill being advocated by the lumber industry which would set up machinery for disposal of federal lands state by state.

D'Ewart said Interior could not recommend congressional approval of the bill, S. 3444, "in the form in which it was introduced, despite our sympathy with the objectives which led to its introduction."
In the form in which it was introduced, the bill would call for creation by the President of federal-state land study commissions in every state which asked for one. Each commission would make a study of government and private forest and grazing holdings in the state and report recommendations for changes to the President.
Would Prepare Plan
The President, under the bill, would then be compelled to "prepare a plan for the disposal of the lands recommended for disposal" which would involve sales to the highest bidder. In drafting this plan, the President would be directed to "provide that, so far as practicable, such lands shall be disposed of in tracts of such size and number and under such terms and conditions

as will best serve the purposes of the federal government, the state, and the general public, taking into consideration the predominant land needs, if such exist, of present land owners in the vicinity of such lands and the need of potential purchasers for a long-term, low-interest rate purchase program to enable them to purchase such lands."
The land disposal plan would go into effect 60 days after being announced, unless Congress during that period took action to block it. The bill would exclude from disposal all "national parks, monuments, recreation areas, military parks and battlefields and similar national shrines, wildlife reservations or wilderness and similar areas."

O&C Lands Covered
The most valuable lands covered by the bill are the national forests and Oregon's O&C timberlands.
The U.S. Forest Service has come out strongly against the bill, which was introduced by Sen. Russell Long (D-La.). The Forest Service said the bill "might result in disposal of substantial portions of the national forests... (whose) establishment was the first major conservation action of the federal government. It was largely because of this action that conservation of our natural resources first became a widely accepted public goal and a major element of national policy. Enactment of such anti-conservation legislation would be contrary to the policies of this department..."

we are opposed to any legislation which might result in possible large-scale breaking up of the national forest system."
The Forest Service also questioned the constitutionality of the bill, inasmuch as it "would require the President to follow a commission's recommendation."
Budget Bureau Opposed
The Budget Bureau also came out unqualifiedly against the bill, saying separate commissions for each state would "prevent objective consideration of competing interstate, regional or national interests." It pointed out that the President's commission on government reorganization proposed a single committee to make a study of all federal rural lands and laws affecting them.

Interior's view, said D'Ewart, was that this particular bill "might lead to widely divergent patterns of disposal in a field in which consistency and uniformity are desirable."
"The basic principle underlying this legislation, namely, the belief that land should not be retained in ownership by the federal government when it would be more effectively managed in the public interest by other hands, is one with which we are in accord," explained D'Ewart.
D'Ewart said Interior could not endorse Long's bill because it thought "a commission to study the problem of federally owned lands should be limited in its functions to the making of studies; its recommendations should be merely recommendations, and not have the almost binding effect provided in S.3444. Furthermore, a commission of this sort should be given an opportunity to study problems on a national basis and not be limited to one state. These are the two objections which go

to the very heart of the matter."
Resolution Pledges Efforts
The National Lumber Manufacturers Association announced its advocacy of Long's bill in its directors meeting several weeks ago in Seattle. They passed a resolution pledging the organization's "best efforts" to put the bill through Congress. It called on the support of "all organizations and individuals believing in private ownership and competitive enterprise."
No hearings have yet been called for by the Senate Interior Committee, where the bill has been since it was introduced three months ago. With Congress heading toward a mid-July adjournment, it is doubtful any final action will be taken on it this session.

Quotes From the News

By UNITED PRESS
Washington—President Eisenhower on the death of Fleet Adm. Ernest J. King:
"The nation has lost a great American and an outstanding naval officer."
Washington—Adm. Arleigh A. Burke, chief of naval operations, on the death of King:
"He will emerge as one of the outstanding military figures of our time."
London—Former President Truman on dictators:
"There is no difference among totalitarians whether they are Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin or Khrushchev."
Atlantic City, N.J.—Gov. Abraham Ribicoff of Connecticut on Gov. Averell Harriman's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination:
"I don't think it's going to get very far."
Atlantic City, N.J.—Gov. A. B. Chandler of Kentucky on the Democratic national nomination:
"I'm a favorite son candidate that would become serious if he had the opportunity."

Commission Proposes New Water Contract

Central Point—The Medford Water commission presented a new proposal for a water contract for the city of Central Point at a meeting last Wednesday.
The new schedule, which would provide that the charges be based on a maximum demand for water, would lower the cost of water to Central Point by .5 per cent if water used equals that used during 1955. Under the proposed method the city would be treated as a single eight-inch connection.
Negotiations on the new water contract have been underway since last winter when the previous contract expired.

UPS-A-DAISY!
Dearborn, Mich.—(U.P.)—Richard Cayen, 25, a Dearborn policeman, escaped with only cuts and bruises because he landed on the roof of the car that struck his motorcycle. The impact of the crash pitched Cayen high into the air but his fall was cushioned by the car roof. The officer slid off the roof, onto the hood and then to the ground.
Hartford, Conn.—(U.P.)—Bus driver James Hayes of East Haven noticed an unidentified motorist waving frantically to him from his car. Hayes stopped the bus and stepped outside. As he did so, the unoccupied bus burst into flames. The motorist told Hayes he had seen smoke coming from the bus and had chased it several blocks to warn him.



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