

Congress Considers Measure To Update Public Land Laws

WASHINGTON (CQ) — Congress presently is considering a measure designed to bring up to date public land laws of horse and buggy vintage.

There are now 50 major laws on the statute books relative to the management of 770,796,843 acres of federal land holdings in the United States. This is 33.9 per cent of the 11 Western states and Alaska.

John A. Carver Jr., Assistant Secretary of Interior for Public Land Management, has called many of the public land laws on the statute books "either dead letters, or they ought to be."

At the same time he has said rapidly changing conditions in this country have brought about "gaps" in present public land statutes which call for new legislation from Congress.

The need for public land reform is considered to be both immediate and urgent by the Interior Department because of the rapidly increasing pressures on public land resulting from the population explosion now going on in the Western states and because of increasing competition among conflicting users of public land. Commercial users and conservationist groups, which often held divergent views on public land programs, strongly back public land reform.

Public Land Commission
The House Public Lands Subcommittee is currently in the process of "marking up" or revising legislation to establish a 19-member Public Land Law Review Commission to study existing public land laws and procedures and to make recommendations on modernizing and improving them.

Such legislation has been introduced by Chairman Wayne N. Aspinall, D-Colo., of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee and by Reps. Walter S. Baring, D-Nev., John H. Kyl, R-Iowa, and Morris K. Udall, D-Ariz.

The commission proposal is patterned after the 15-member Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission authorized in 1958 by Congress to make an inventory of the nation's outdoor recreation resources and needs and to make recommendations for meeting such needs in the foreseeable future. The report filed by ORRRC in 1961 led to the establishment of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in the Interior Department in 1962 and to the Administration proposal now before Congress to establish a land conservation fund to pay for new public recreation areas and facilities.

Because public land laws are so complex, sponsors of the public land law review commission proposals believe the commission approach would provide the best method of identifying the problems and recommending statutory solutions to them.

Hearings on the proposals were held by the House Public Lands Subcommittee on Sept. 9-10 and on Oct. 3-4.

Most Pressing Needs
These hearings identified areas where there is the most pressing need for new legislation. The natural growth of many communities in the Southwest is being hampered because the communities are entirely surrounded by federal land holdings. Rep. Udall said, "a rational workable means of getting land into state ownership and private ownership must be found to meet the needs in these heavily populated areas that are growing so fast."

Bernard L. Orell, chairman of the committee on forest management of the National Lumber Manufacturers Association, who was a member of the ORRRC Commission, strongly backed up suggestions of the Interior and Agriculture Departments that some solution must be found to "checkerboard" land where federal, state and private holdings are intermingled in many Western and Southern states.

Other problems include: The trend toward separating surface rights from subsurface rights on public lands;

Difficulties relative to obtaining easements and rights-of-way across federally-held land.

The increasing use of the public domain for recreation and the inability of the Bureau of Land Management to cope with the problem because of lack of statutory authority to provide recreation and sanitary facilities on the public domain;

Lack of a definite public policy on the type of federal lands

to retain in federal ownership and the type to transfer to state or private ownership.

There was widespread support expressed in the hearings for

the objectives of the bills to establish the so called "PLLRRC" Commission. Daniel A. Poole, director of conservation of the Wildlife Management Institute,

summed up the views of conservationist and commercial users alike when he stated: "Revision of the public land laws . . . would be a complex

and time-consuming undertaking. But such revision is absolutely necessary . . . The present patchwork of outmoded and vague laws are a confusion and

frustration . . . to the Congress, to the public and to the administering agencies." (Copyright 1963, Congressional Quarterly, Inc.)

Ashlander Injured As Car Hits Pole

ASHLAND — Gary Clinton Winner, 18, of 510 Wimer St., was injured late Sunday night when his car struck a steel light pole in Lithia Park. Ashland police said Winner was southbound on Winburn

Way at 11:20 p.m. when he apparently lost control of his car at the intersection with Nutley St. and skidded into the pole. Winner was taken by ambulance to Ashland Community Hospital for treatment.

HOMICIDE PROBED

PORTLAND (UPI) — Police said Monday they were investigating the possibility of homicide in the death of John Pihulake, 37, Portland, whose body was found in his parked car Saturday.



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Gina Lollobrigida Has Tonsillitis

POOLE QUAY, England (UPI)—Italian movie star Gina Lollobrigida was ordered to bed by her doctor Monday but ignored the advice and continued filming despite a bad case of tonsillitis.

Miss Lollobrigida, who is filming "A Woman of Straw" here, appeared to be in pain as she spoke her lines and went to bed in her hotel room immediately after the day's shooting was over.

A spokesman said Miss Lollobrigida "she seems to be getting over it and we hope she will be back in the office in a few days."