68TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT
2d Session } { No. 1166

TO CONSOLIDATE CERTAIN LANDS WITHIN THE SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST

JANUARY 13, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WINTER, from the Committee on the Public Lands, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 2689]

The Committee on the Public Lands, to whom was referred H. R. 2689, a bill to consolidate certain lands within the Snoqualmie National Forest, having fully considered the same, report favorably thereon and recommend its passage without amendment.

The bill extends the provisions of the general national forest exchange act of March 20, 1922, to certain lands adjoining the Snoqualmie National Forest, the character of which lands are shown by the letters of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to be such as to be properly placed in the forest reserve, as they are not of an agricultural or grazing homestead character. Their best purpose is to preserve the natural scenic effect. The letters of the Secretary of Agriculture and of the Secretary of the Interior follow:

JANUARY 3, 1925.

Hon. N. J. SINNOTT,
Chairman Committee on the Public Lands,
House of Representatives.

DEAR MR. SINNOTT: Reference is made to your letter of December 21, requesting a report on the bill (H. R. 2689) to consolidate certain lands within the Snoqualmie National Forest.

This measure is identical with the bill H. R. 14394, which was before the committee in the Sixty-seventh Congress and upon which the department submitted a report under date of March 1, 1923. In reporting upon that measure, the following statement was made:

"Section 1 in this bill would extend the provisions of the general national forest exchange act of March 20, 1922, to certain lands adjoining the Snoqualmie National Forest. Under this provision the owners of the private lands could offer their holdings, and if this department found that the exchanges were in the public interest, that the lands were chiefly valuable for national forest purposes, and the areas selected did not exceed them in value, the Secretary of the Interior

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could accept title. Upon the acceptance of title the lands would form parts of the Snoqualmie Forest. Section 2 would authorize the addition to the national forest of lands within the designated area which are now in public ownership.

"The lands in question form a strip running nearly through the central part of the national forest along the Skyhomish River. The topography generally follows the character of the lands within the forest boundaries. They are timber covered or are chiefly valuable for timber production. Title was obtained from the Government principally through the grant to the Northern Pacific Railroad Co. Nearly all of the balance is patented under the timber and stone law or the homestead entry law. The chief lumber species are Douglas fir, western red cedar, western hemlock, and amobilis fir. Because of the steep slopes, climatic and other conditions, agricultural pursuits are not followed. An automobile road traverses the valley, and it is learned that the local public-spirited citizens are desirous that the Government should control the area to preserve the natural scenic features."

Since this measure would enable the department to place under national forest administration certain lands which are chiefly valuable for timber production and form parts of natural forest administration units, the department recommends favorable consideration of the bill.

Very truly yours,

HENRY C. WALLACE, *Secretary.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, March 19, 1924.

Hon. N. J. SINNOTT,
Chairman Committee on the Public Lands,
House of Representatives.

MY DEAR MR. SINNOTT: I have received your request for report on H. R. 2689, entitled "To consolidate certain lands within the Snoqualmie National Forest," in Washington.

A similar measure (H. R. 14394), was introduced in the last session of the Sixty-seventy Congress and was received too late for report by this department. Section 1 of the present measure would, by extending the provisions of the act of March 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 465), over the therein-described area, permit exchange of privately owned land therein for Government land or timber in any national forest in the State upon a basis of equal value. Section 2 would include the public lands within such area in the Snoqualmie Forest subject to prior valid claims. The area involved adjoins the forest, extends along both banks of the Skykomish River, and available information indicates that it is generally mountainous and timbered, the agricultural lands being confined to the narrow river valleys. The records of the General Land Office of this department show that such area is surveyed and contains 38,380 acres, is located within the primary limits of the grant to the Northern Pacific Railroad Co., and that it has practically all passed out of Government ownership, the odd-numbered sections to the railroad company and the remainder under other of the public land laws. The unappropriated public lands within the area are scattered tracts aggregating 320 acres.

I am without information as to the necessity or advisability of the legislation proposed and do not believe as a rule that it is good policy to remove from settlement and include within a national forest public lands adapted to agriculture or grazing. I would interpose no objection to the enactment of this measure, however, in view of the character of the public lands involved and as the exchanges contemplated are optional with the Government.

Reference of the bill to the Secretary of Agriculture is suggested as he is primarily interested in the exchange proposed.

Very truly yours,

HUBERT WORK.

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