

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

JUNE 7, 1926.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

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

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 12264]

The Committee on the Public Lands, to whom was referred (H. R. 12264) to facilitate and simplify the work of the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report it favorably to the House with the recommendation that it do pass without amendment.

The necessity for the enactment of the measure is fully explained in the following letter from the Secretary of the Interior, which is herein set out in full for the information of the House, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, May 7, 1926.

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

MY DEAR MR. SINNOTT: I transmit herewith for your consideration and introduction, if deemed proper, draft of a proposed bill, "To facilitate and simplify the work of the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, and for other purposes."

Section 1 of the proposed bill is desirable in view of the following situation: Visitors to the remote sections of the national parks are frequently found by rangers in distress from want of food and supplies. Also during the off season when the hotels, service stations, and other accommodations of the concessionaires are closed, visitors from distant points come up into the parks without realizing the true conditions and run out of food and supplies, particularly gasoline and oil. While there is no authority of law in the matter, the superintendents feel that where a human life is at stake they must furnish assistance; and they have done so, collecting for the service rendered an amount sufficient to cover the cost to the service of the food and supplies furnished. Under existing laws the amounts collected must be deposited in the Treasury of the United States to the credit of "Miscellaneous receipts." It can not be used to replace the food and supplies sold. The net result is that the operations of the service are curtailed to the extent to which such emergency service is rendered. At times appropriation conditions have been such that the park employees have rendered assistance from their personal resources. The situation is particularly

acute in a park like Sequoia National Park, where there are no concessionaires whatever during the off season, and there is no place within the park or for some distance outside where food supplies or gasoline and oil can be procured (except from the park supply house) and the roads are passable up into the park as far as the snow line during most of the winter. It is evident that when some one comes into a national park and runs out of food or gasoline and oil the superintendent has no other recourse but to sell him sufficient supplies to enable him to reach the nearest source of supply.

The provisions of section 2 of the proposed bill would authorize the use of national park and national monument funds to provide medical attention to employees of the National Park Service located in isolated situations. By the act of Congress approved March 3, 1925 (43 Stat. 1132), similar authority was granted the Secretary of Agriculture in the administration of the Forest Service. The work of many of the park officers and employees takes them into remote situations in the national parks and national monuments where medical services are difficult to obtain. In their work these men are necessarily subjected to hardships by reason of exposure, to strenuous labor frequently necessitated by emergencies, such as fire fighting, and camp food often improperly prepared by themselves or other persons unskilled in this duty. In cases of illness it becomes necessary either to transport them for considerable distances to secure medical attention or to bring in such assistance when removal is inadvisable. This provision is not intended to apply in cases of disablement or death arising from injuries received in the course of employment, reimbursement being made for all such expenditures necessarily incurred by the United States Employees' Compensation Commission. It is desirable both from a humane standpoint and from that of good administration for the Park Service to take such action as may be required in particular cases to provide medical assistance with the least possible delay; or, in case of death, to bring the body of the decedent to some place where it can be prepared for shipment or burial.

A copy of this proposed bill was submitted by me to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, and on April 29, 1926, he advised that the proposed legislation is not in conflict with the financial program of the President.

Under even date, I have transmitted a copy of this proposed legislation to the chairman Committee on Public Lands and Surveys, United States Senate, with a similar recommendation.

Very truly yours,

HUBERT WORK.

