

Welcome

TO YOUR PARK...



Jim Forman

WHETHER you're gazing into the red chasm of the Grand Canyon, watching Yellowstone's Old Faithful spew its boiling torrent into the sky, examining the ruins at Mesa Verde, or seeing one of the countless other wonderful sights in the 180 national parks and monuments, you're seeing a part of America that has been preserved so that you and your children and their children will always be able to find enjoyment and inspiration far beyond ordinary experiences.

FOR THE BENEFIT AND ENJOYMENT OF THE PEOPLE

The care and management of these areas is entrusted to the National Park Service, a bureau of the Department of the Interior, and whose motto reads, "The National Park Service is dedicated to the conservation of America's scenic and historic heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

The conservation of these areas, providing roads, campsites, ranger protection, and all the many other needs inherent in park management, require a good many dollars. These dollars are allocated to the Park Service by the parent department, which, in turn, receives its funds by congressional appropriation. None of the money from park entrance fees is retained in the individual parks; rather, all goes into the United States Treasury. This is the procedure followed by the Federal Government for all revenues secured.

MORE VISITORS EVERY YEAR TO NATIONAL PARKS AND MONUMENTS

All the parks and monuments have been used more by all the people since World War II. Every year travel to them reaches a new high.

Such popularity plainly makes it necessary that there be overnight accommodations, restaurants, gas stations, and other services to provide the basic needs of these travelers while, in their own fashions, they enjoy the surroundings that have drawn them.

RATES, FEES, CONTRACTS ARE UNDER CONSTANT REVIEW BY GOVERNMENT

To provide these various services there are in most of the parks one or several privately financed and operated companies. These companies are referred to as concessioners and vary in size according to the demands peculiar to the individual park. Each operates under the terms of a contract with the Department of the Interior. No contract

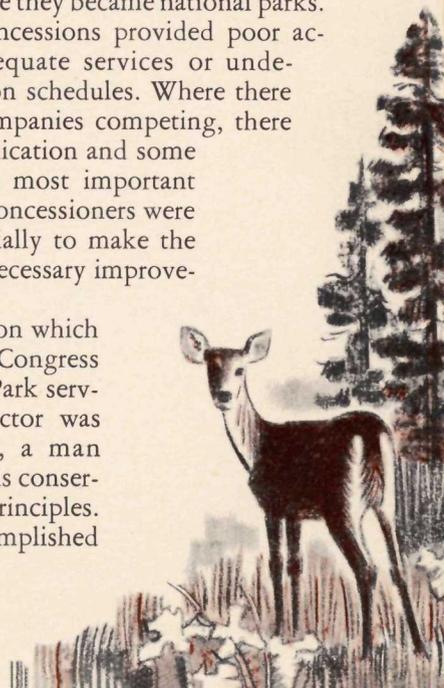
is awarded until an operator-company can demonstrate its ability to provide facilities and services prescribed by the National Park Service. During the contract's life all rates charged the public for services, merchandise, meals and rooms are approved by the National Park Service and these rates are set to approximate the charges for similar goods or services of similar establishments outside the areas. Too, the concessioner must continually improve and modernize his plant to provide adequate service and still guard the soundness of his business. Just as the concessioners must maintain and improve their structures and facilities, the National Park Service has to provide and keep up its roads, parking areas, buildings and utilities. In the cities, business depends on local Government for certain services and protection and so it is in the national parks, where the concessioners are generally dependent upon government to see that water, electricity, sewers, etc., are made available, for which concessioners pay at rates fixed by the National Park Service to cover the cost of these services. Needless to say, the Bureau must depend upon congressional appropriations for the funds it requires for these and all other expenditures.

Each concessioner has the same basic type of contract, and while contracts may vary in certain details, each calls for payment of fees to the United States Treasury, usually both flat fees and fees on the basis of the year's business experience. In addition, concessioners pay the usual federal, state and local taxes.

ADEQUATE SERVICE TO PUBLIC CALLS FOR STRONG CONCESSIONERS

Concessions have a long history, having existed in some of the areas before they became national parks. Some of the early concessions provided poor accommodations, inadequate services or undependable transportation schedules. Where there were several small companies competing, there were unnecessary duplication and some business failures. But most important was the fact that few concessioners were strong enough financially to make the large investments in necessary improvements.

This was the situation which existed in 1916 when Congress created the National Park service, whose first Director was Stephen T. Mather, a man deeply respected for his conservation and park use principles. Director Mather accomplished



the elimination of unsatisfactory operations, the merging of small ones and the formation of new concession companies. To the major surviving interests he gave preferential contracts in their respective fields, and of them he required large investments in needed improvements.

CONCESSION PRIVILEGES ARE BALANCED BY OBLIGATIONS

This general policy continues in effect. The selection of a concessioner is made only if an operator, company, group, or individual can demonstrate ability to provide facilities which are needed for the public to enjoy park areas. The contracts signed by the major concessioners give them a preferential, but not a monopolistic position. These agreements carry many obligations in return for the privileges they grant. For example, there must be adequate service early and late in the season, and in some parks bus lines must operate on schedule the year around whether there are a few passengers or a bus load. High mountain camps and pack trips are provided often at a loss. And, if the government considers some new or additional facility necessary or desirable in the public interest, the preferential concessioner is requested to provide it. If he refuses, the government may call in others to do so. As in the case of public utilities, where competition is uneconomical, government regulation of services and rates takes its place.

Over the years following the adoption of these policies, park facilities and services have improved, rates have been stabilized and many of the earlier problems have disappeared. Careful investigation by qualified and impartial groups and by numerous government officials have reaffirmed Mather's position.

PUBLIC SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE

The outlook for satisfactory public service in the parks is more promising now than in many years past. There are active improvement and replacement programs under way, all guided by the National Park Service. To the end of providing the best accommodations, meals, and other types of services, in a fair price range and under the sometimes difficult conditions of isolation and overcrowding, the park concessioners are individually and jointly dedicated.

This leaflet has been prepared and distributed by the Western Conference of National Park Concessioners.

