

THE KINGS RIVER REGION SHOULD BE A NATIONAL PARK



R. C. LEWIS

In the heart of the proposed John Muir National Park. (One of the mile-deep canyons—Middle Fork of Kings River.)

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THE JOHN MUIR-KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARK

(Bill pending in House of Representatives, H. R. 3794)

JOHN MUIR, "greatest of the mountain prophets," as long ago as 1891 directed the attention of the American people to the glorious scenery and extraordinary recreational attractions of the Sierran wilderness on the headwaters of the South and Middle Forks of the Kings River in California, and urged that a National Park be created to insure their permanent preservation. The Sierra Club, of which John Muir was the first President (1892-1914), has consistently championed this cause.

The Gearhart Bill

A particularly favorable opportunity to bring this proposal to final realization is now presented by a bill (H. R. 3794) introduced in the House of Representatives by Hon. B. W. Gearhart of Fresno, providing for the creation of a 438,000-acre National Park embracing these two Kings River Canyons. Because John Muir first called attention to the outstanding importance of the region, this is to be known as the "*John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park*."

This important measure now before Congress involves merely a transfer of lands, already publicly owned, from the two National Forests of which they are but a comparatively small part, to a new and more appropriate status—a National Park set aside in perpetuity as a primeval wilderness area.

Entirely a non-partisan measure, receiving enthusiastic aid from leaders adhering to both major political parties, this new bill has strong Administration support and the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, always deemed essential to the passage of legislation of this sort by Congress.

Position of the Sierra Club

The Sierra Club, a conservation organization of more than 3,500 members, has consistently advocated the inclusion of this region in a National Park. A careful study of the bill's provisions, an intimate first-hand knowledge of the country to be preserved, and a realization that it is of

the outstanding character which marks it as fulfilling the very highest National Park standards caused the Sierra Club to strongly endorse the new bill now before Congress.

This Club always has stood for the ideal that a true National Park is a primeval wilderness area of supreme scenic beauty, a conspicuous example of Nature's handiwork upon a scale large enough to be of national importance, and eminently worthy of complete preservation for the inspiration of present and future generations, and for recreation of the American people.

The Issue

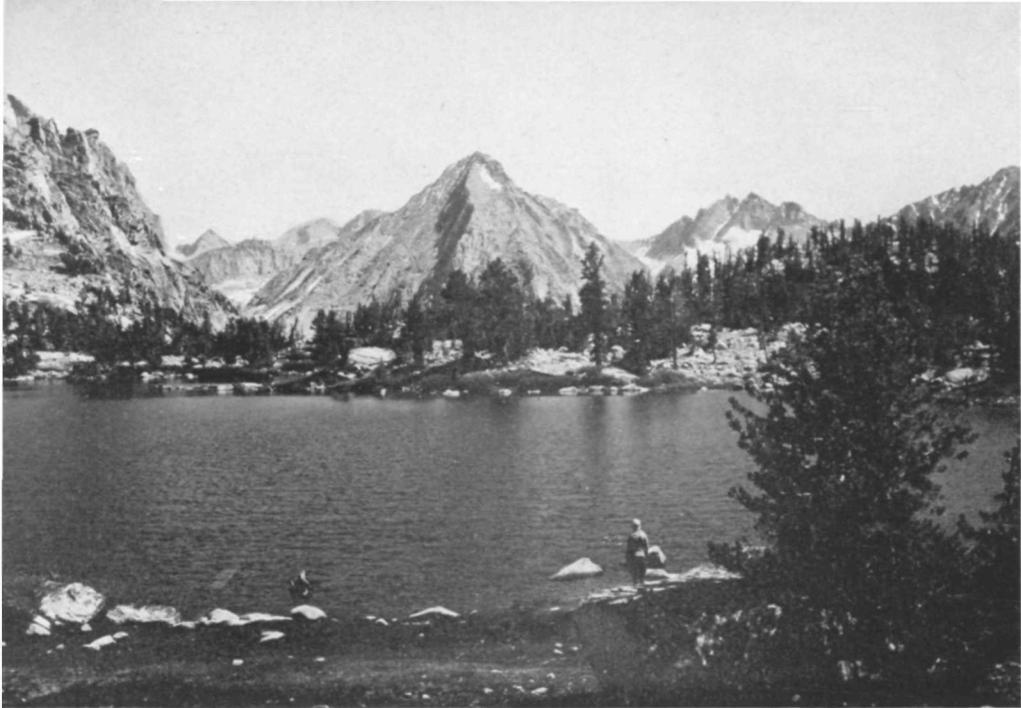
As the people now own this superb highland area outright, the issue involved is whether it shall be assured of permanent and complete protection as a National Park, or whether it shall remain in a status which leaves it open to ultimate commercial development.

A True National Park

Under the law, the fundamental purpose of National Parks with primeval characteristics is "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historical objects and the wild life therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." By legal definition, they are "areas of unmodified natural condition, each the finest of its kind in the country, preserved forever from all industrial use."



Alpine lakes glitter below the Kearsarge Pinnacles.



Bullfrog Lake, East Vidette and Deerhorn Mountain.

The National Park Standards, prepared by the Camp Fire Club of America, and to which the American Forestry Association, the National Parks Association, the National Association of Audubon Societies, and many other conservation organizations have subscribed, define National Parks as "spacious land areas essentially in their primeval condition, and so outstandingly superior in quality and beauty to average examples of their several types as to demand their preservation intact and in their entirety for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of all the people for all time."

The Kings River region possesses all of these qualifications to an extraordinary degree, as John Muir so early declared.

Endorsed by Conservationists

That this region is distinctively of National Park caliber has been affirmed on various occasions by numerous organizations which are vitally concerned in conservation. Among those which have in the past favored inclusion of this

Kings River region in a National Park are:

The National Parks Association,
The American Civic Association (now
the American Planning and Civic Association),

The General Federation of Women's
Clubs,

The Council on National Parks, Forests
and Wild Life (a group representing
26 public-spirited Associations),

California State Grange,

John Muir Association.

The Appalachian Mountain Club,

The Boone and Crockett Club,

The Emergency Conservation Committee
of New York,

and similar non-commercial and non-partisan organizations of national standing.

The same conclusion has been expressed by prominent men and women well known as conservationists, many of whom have visited the Kings River country. Among those who have declared that it is of National Park caliber may be mentioned:



The Kearsarge Pinnacles in mid-July.

David Starr Jordan,
Mrs. John D. Sherman (a former President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs),
Stephen T. Mather (the first Director of the National Park Service),
Henry A. Wallace (Secretary of Agriculture),
and four successive Chief Foresters, heads of the United States Forest Service: Henry Solon Graves,
William B. Greeley,
Robert Y. Stuart,
Ferdinand A. Silcox, the incumbent.

Removal from National Forests Urged

The Sierra Club holds that as a matter of immediate and permanent national policy, the Kings River country should be a National Park rather than to remain a part of the two National Forests. The National Forest Service has on several occasions through its chief spokesman expressed not only a willingness to relinquish control of the area but has even advocated the creation of a Na-

tional Park embracing substantially this area.

As William B. Greeley, when Chief Forester, so clearly pointed out, the National Forests are "reservations which exist primarily for commercial development" of the natural resources within them. He said, further: "... in our judgment the area as outlined in the entire scope of the bill represents the outstanding region not only in the Sierra Nevada of California but in the entire backbone extending through the Cascade region of Oregon and Washington that justifies an additional National Park. I am quite familiar with this area personally, having been a local forest officer in that section for a number of years. When you consider all that is involved in this tract, the fact that the entire country is above 5,000 feet in elevation, with the exception possibly of a few of the canyon bottoms; that it contains many peaks with an elevation in excess of 14,000 feet; and that it contains outstanding canyons of the West, combined with a wonderful region of lakes and alpine forests, the



Bubbs Creek Falls, above Kings River Canyon.

combination has fixed this area in my mind for a good many years as one of the places which should be established and administered as a National Park."

A Regional Forester, when speaking recently in regard to this very Kings River area, declared, "By definition, all resources of the National Forest—timber, range, water, wild life, and recreational values—are available for use as needed. There is no barrier in law, in policy, or in practice to getting from these properties everything they are capable of producing. They are, of course, a great recreational outlet in their present management. But, in addition, they *are a great pool of raw material on which business may draw. . .*" This viewpoint, so at variance with the expressions of opinion of the former chiefs of the National Forest service, furnishes the most powerful reason for preserving this area permanently from exploitation.

Action Is Needed—Now

In the face of these uncertainties, a move to settle the matter on a permanent

basis appears imperative. Unless affirmative action is taken now, it may be too late.

No Obstacles of Any Consequence

Objections which have been raised to this measure are inconsequential when compared to the values to be preserved. Previous differences have largely been eliminated by the provisions of the bill.

Irrigation Rights Protected

The just claims of residents of the San Joaquin Valley, in the lowlands of central California, upon the waters of the Kings River are fully recognized in the pending bill. Such opposition as was made, in past years, by certain irrigation and power interests, has been withdrawn. The Kings River Water Association, as well as the seventeen active districts which comprise the association, have endorsed the present Park proposal.

Flood control works are entirely *outside* the proposed Park. Above the reservoir sites, the terrain is too steep and empoundage too limited for practical flood control. An important reason for



Looking down Kings River Canyon from Sphinx Creek trail.

hastening passage of the bill now before Congress is to speed up the program and solve some of the problems of Kings River water conservation and control. These developments will tie in with the great Central Valleys Water Project.

Exclusion of Tehipite Valley and Lower Part of Kings River Canyon

Some persons object to the exclusion of the Tehipite floor and the lower portion of the floor of the main South Fork Canyon from the proposed Park. It is regrettable that these desirable areas should have to be excluded but this exclusion is deemed necessary by San Joaquin Valley residents, for the general power and irrigation development of the Kings River. Whether these reservoir sites will eventually be needed for the storage of water only the future can tell. The bill provides that if they are not required for this purpose they may by Presidential proclamation then be included within the Park. Only the lower and scenically less important part of the

main South Fork Canyon floor will be affected. The Tehipite Dome and the walls and sculptured rocks of both valleys are embraced in the proposed Park area. As both Drs. Joseph LeConte and David Starr Jordan declared, it is the high mountain areas surrounding these valley floors that are outstanding in their majesty and magnificence.

Grazing Conditions

Grazing in the new National Park area is limited now to a very few places—comparatively small meadows, mostly at the lower elevations—and for only about three months in the year. Existing commitments as to grazing are recognized in the bill, and assurance has been given that no undue hardship will be imposed on these cattlemen, whose present rights will be continued during their lifetime, when they will terminate. No sheep have been permitted to graze in the Kings River region for a number of years and only 300 have grazed in the small area at the headwaters of the South Fork of the San Joaquin also to be included in the Park.



Photograph by Walter L. Huber.

Grouse Meadows, in the Canyon of the Middle Fork of the Kings River.

The proposed John Muir National Park embraces 438,000 acres in the High Sierra of California, including the mile-deep canyons of the south and middle forks of the Kings River; the main crest of the Sierra Nevada from the Kings-Kern Divide north to the Palisades, the Evolution Range and Mount Goddard.

Small Revenue

This area now produces very little revenue for the Forest Service. The portion now received from this area by the counties under existing law is insignificant.

Lumbering

There is little merchantable timber in the area. Non-commercial forests clothe most of the steeper slopes and canyons, and add to the attractiveness of the rugged landscapes. The recreational and inspirational values of these forests are far greater than any value they might have for producing sawmill timber.

Mining

This region is above the mineral belt of the Sierra and no productive mining has ever been carried on in this area.

Hunting

Only an average of 157 deer are killed per year in this wilderness area. The interests of deerhunters will be furthered by the setting aside of this area as a game reserve. Better hunting outside the Park will be insured thereby.

The attitude of sportsmen nationally is typified by the Boone and Crockett Club (an organization of big game hunters founded by Theodore Roosevelt), which has gone on record as favoring the inclusion of this area in a Park.

Added Protection of Sierra Wild Sheep

The Sierra big-horn sheep, facing extinction, are often killed during the deer-hunting season. In the entire Sierra only about 50 big-horn sheep remain, and most of these range within this area, and would receive added protection in a Park.

Fishing

The operation of fish hatcheries, the construction of rearing ponds and the stocking of streams, as is done in all National Parks, will materially improve the trout-fishing.

Wilderness Aspect to Be Preserved

The bill provides that the John Muir National Park, when established, will be preserved in its natural wilderness state. Access to the Park will be over the new highway constructed by the Forest Service and the State, leading from General Grant National Park into the floor of the canyon of the South Fork of the Kings River. There are to be no roads except this entrance road. Trails will be improved but kept as few as possible, consistent with reasonable access to the various points of interest.

Trail-camps may be established for visitors to the Park. All such forms of development which contribute to recreation are to be made in a manner which will assure preservation of the primeval character of the region.

Assurance is given that there will be no additional entrance fee over that now charged for automobiles entering General Grant or Sequoia National Parks. (\$1.00 fee will admit an automobile to all three Parks for a period of a year.)

National Park a Great Economic Asset

Aside from its other important advantages, this new National Park will have—as have other National Parks—great economic value to the people of the United States, and especially California. San Joaquin Valley communities will benefit most directly in a financial way, through the expenditures made by visitors to the Park.

Recreational and Esthetic Values Saved

Above all, the success of the program embodied in the new bill before Congress will mean the permanent preservation of one of the most superb scenic areas in the world.

This region to be set aside includes the south and middle forks of the Kings River, which are in great river canyons, throughout their entire length comparable in grandeur to Yosemite; the main crest of the Sierra Nevada from the



Looking down the Middle Fork of Kings River, from Dusy Creek trail.

Kings-Kern Divide north to the Palisades, the Evolution Range and Mount Goddard. In the proposed Park area are forty peaks more than 11,000 feet high and several more than 14,000 feet high. Nearly 600 alpine lakes are in this area.

The Tehipite Dome, a great granite monolith considered by many as without a peer in the world, for its type of dome structure, is embraced within the proposed Park.

The wooded canyons, and the native flowers which abound in unusual variety, add much to the charm of this High Sierra park-land which now is to be held inviolate for the people of our country.

No Further Extension of Park Boundary

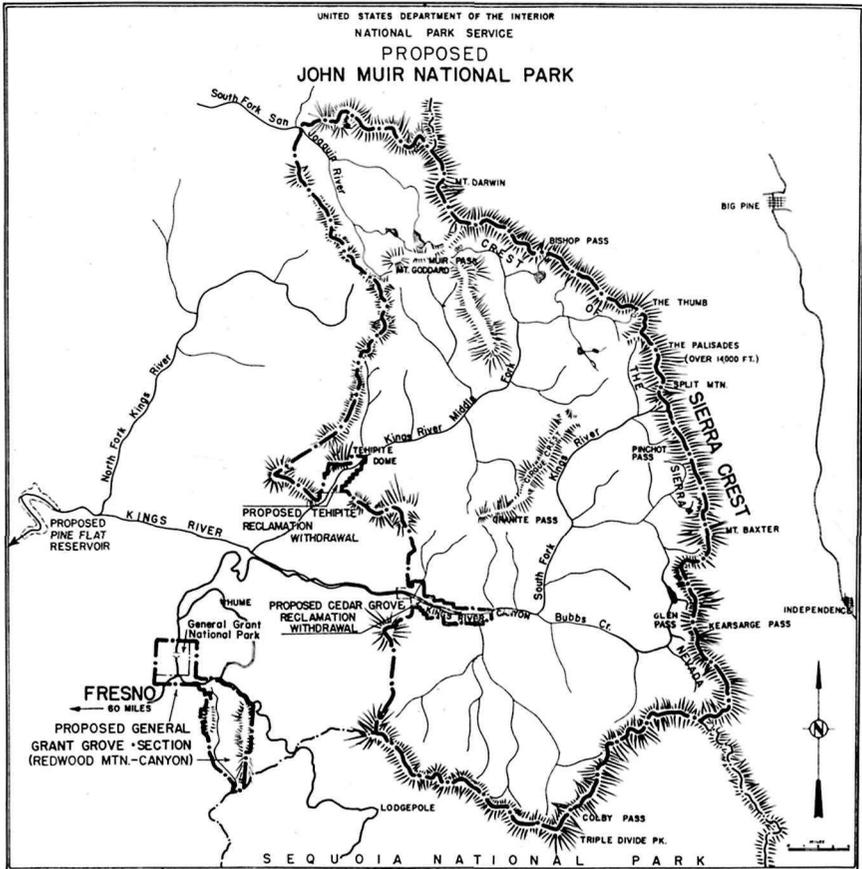
Some have claimed that the intention is in the future to make the entire High Sierra a National Park. It has been au-

thoritatively stated that there is no intention of creating any National Park between this proposed area and the Mt. Ritter region.

A National Issue

The preservation of the Kings River country is an issue *national* in scope. It is fortuitous that this extraordinarily fine highland region is in California, as are several other National Parks — *that* grouping was the handiwork of the Creator. Everyone recognizes that these park-land areas are to be looked on as heritages of the American people, the most precious of their possessions.

As a national issue, not localized, it is to be decided by the Congress of the United States, on the basis of the greatest good for the greatest number; and everyone favoring the highest use of this region is asked to aid in the creation of this the John Muir National Park.



Literature Descriptive of the Region

- A Rival of the Yosemite*, John Muir. (*Century Magazine*, Nov., 1891).
- The Life and Letters of John Muir* (Vol. II, pp. 252-255), William Frederic Bade.
- Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada*, Clarence King.
- Your National Parks* (pp. 99-104), Enos Mills.
- The Call of the Mountains* (pp. 155-173), LeRoy Jeffers.
- The Book of the National Parks* (pp. 69-92), Robert Sterling Yard.
- Alps of the Kings-Kern Divide*, David Starr Jordan.
- The Mountains*, Stewart Edward White.
- The Pass*, Stewart Edward White.
- Place Names of the High Sierra*, Francis P. Farquhar.
- Guide to the John Muir Trail and High Sierra Region*, Walter A. Starr, Jr.
- Sierra Club Bulletin*, 1893 to date.

"All this wonderful Kings River region should be comprehended in one grand National Park. This region contains no mines of consequence; it is too high and too rocky for agriculture; and even the lumber industry need suffer no reasonable restrictions."—JOHN MUIR, in *Century Magazine*, Vol. XXI, p. 78 (Nov., 1891).

Scenically superb

"Scenically this country is unexcelled, of its kind, in the United States. Its eastern boundary follows the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. In kind it is similar to Yosemite, but differs materially in variety, in climax, and particularly in the extraordinary massing of the peaks. I know of no country of similar magnificence whose fastnesses can be penetrated and enjoyed with similar comfort because of the practical absence of rain during the summer months."—*Franklin K. Lane*, when U. S. Secretary of the Interior.

Mountain sculpture on giant scale

"I have never seen a more magnificent mountain panorama. I have seen the mountains of this continent from Alaska to Mexico, and I have tramped many mountain miles in the Alps, but such a comprehensive view of mountain masses and peaks and amphitheaters and canyons, of all the details of mountain sculpture on the tremendous scale as we are looking on now I have never before seen."—*David Starr Jordan*. (Uttered as he stood at the junction of the Kings-Kern Divide and the Main Crest, in the High Sierra.)

Magnificent in scope

"We believe in the creation of the Park which takes in the great Kings River watershed culminating, as far as height is concerned, in the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. We have in this area probably as magnificent scenery as there is anywhere in the United States."—*Stephen T. Mather*, when Director, National Park Service.

A National Park unexcelled

"This area would make a National Park unexcelled even in America for

sublimity, and unequaled anywhere for rich variety. It is penetrated by trails and affords, with its foaming rivers, its thousands of streams, its hundreds of lakes, its splendid forests, occasional meadows, castellated valleys, inspiring passes, and lofty glacier-shouldered summits, the future camping-out resort of many thousands yearly."—*James D. Phelan*, when United States Senator from California.

Great scenic features

"I am in favor of a Park which will include the great scenic features of the region of the Kings River."—*Henry S. Graves*, Professor of Forestry at Yale, and former Chief of the U. S. Forest Service.

Should be National Park

"This area has been fixed in my mind for a good many years as one of the places which should be established and administered as a National Park."—*William B. Greeley*, when Chief of the U. S. Forest Service.

Best possible use

"For many years the federation (General Federation of Women's Clubs) has supported the project . . . in order that a larger scenic area might be protected and used for park purposes for the benefit of all the people. It is the opinion of the federation that national parks put natural scenery to its best possible use."—*Mrs. John D. Sherman*, when President, General Federation of Women's Clubs.

"Sheer granite"

". . . a region of sheer granite rising in peaks, pinnacles, and minarets, rugged, wonderful, capped with the eternal snows."—*Stewart Edward White*, "The Mountains" (p. 95).

To honor John Muir

"The John Muir Association prefers that the proposed Kings Canyon National Park be named the *John Muir National Park*. Anything less than a great National Park comparable to Yosemite or Yellowstone would not be a fitting tribute to 'the father of our National Parks.'" — *Mrs. Linnie Marsh Wolfe*, Secretary, The John Muir Association.

Ever-growing support

"As solutions for the problems raised have been found, support for the John Muir-Kings Canyon National Park project has grown. . . . Even within the 75 years which have elapsed since the early discoveries in this region, the untouched wilderness in the United States has shrunk from seemingly illimitable regions to easily counted tracts. Such country has steadily acquired increased value, because of its comparative scarcity and increasing demands for outdoor recreation and refreshment." — *Horace M. Albright*, President, American Planning and Civic Association; former Director, National Park Service.

"A veritable song of God"

"This bill should be speedily passed, over the paltering objections of adventurers who place their private farthing schemes above the immeasurable public benefit of a national playground that not only rivals the already overcrowded Yosemite in beauty and spaciousness, but is, in the words of Muir, 'a veritable song of God.'" — *William Frederic Bade*, editor of "The Life and Letters of John Muir." (Vol. II, p. 255.) (This reference is to a bill before Congress some years ago, which would have placed virtually the same area within a National Park.)

Where is there finer?

"I went through the Sequoia National Park and the *Kings* and Kern Valleys with a pack train and I spent there two of the most interesting and healthful weeks of my life. I do not suppose it is

possible to compare the different beauties of nature according to their relative excellence, but if there is any finer scenery in the world than this I should like to see it." — *Frederick H. Gillett*, when U. S. Senator from Massachusetts; long Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Primeval wilderness

"There was one bit of virgin wilderness where one might ride the trails for a month without once viewing so much as a wagon road or any other work of man—a wilderness of marvelous scenic beauty and a veritable paradise for devotees of the rod and fly, a combination to appeal to every lover of the great outdoors." — *Hal G. Evarts*, "Sierras by Camp Fire and Pack," in *Saturday Evening Post* (April 14, 1925).

A matter of great importance

"It seems to me a matter of very great importance that the National Park should include the headwaters of the Kings. The region that would be thus included is one of the most scenic and wonderful in the Higher Sierras." — *Barton Warren Evermann*, when Director of the Museum, California Academy of Sciences.

No country compares

"I have seen all the passes and parks in this country and clear up to the Arctic Ocean, and in Europe. There is no country on the face of the earth that compares with the country in this proposed park." — *Emerson Hough*, the noted author.

Superior in mountain scenery

"Kings River Canyon is far superior . . . in its surrounding mountain scenery." — *Joseph LeConte*, the geologist; in *Sunset*, October, 1900.

"Most wonderful"

"Scenically the most wonderful region in the United States not yet included in a Park is that of the Kings . . . river canyons." — *Le Roy Jeffers*, author of "The Call of the Mountains."

Varied terrain

"This Kings River region contains some of the most stupendously impressive scenery to be found on the face of the globe—great river canyons more than 3,000 feet in depth, with wonderful rock sculptures and towering cliff walls—some of the highest mountains in this country outside of Alaska—numberless exquisite lakes and waterfalls. It includes five great Yosemite-like valleys."—*William E. Colby*, Secretary, The Sierra Club.

Unique beauty and majesty

"I have repeatedly been over most of the region and all of it conforms perfectly with the high standards set by the National Park Service, the National Parks Association, and the President's National Conference on Outdoor Recreation for establishing National Parks. Its permanent dedication as a natural preserve of unique beauty and majesty for the recreation and inspiration of the people, will contribute much more to California and the Nation than any other use of it possibly can."—*Vernon Kellogg*, when Permanent Secretary, National Research Council.

Waterfalls deserving celebrity

"This new area that is proposed to be incorporated into the park has very few trees of commercial value. . . . We counted at least 100 waterfalls that if they were in Switzerland would have become celebrities."—*Gilbert Grosvenor*, Editor, National Geographic Magazine.

Mountain climbing

"The High Sierra region embraced within the Park is famous for its high mountain peaks, affording opportunities for the sport of mountain climbing unexcelled in any other part of the United States."—*Francis P. Farquhar*, Editor, Sierra Club Bulletin.

Conservation

"I am strongly in favor of the broadest outlines of the proposed National Park" (embracing the Kings River region).—*William Kent*, in letter to the Sierra Club (May 12, 1923).

Wilderness preservation

"The purpose of the Department of the Interior, if this National Park is authorized by Congress, is to treat it as a primitive wilderness, limiting roads to the absolute minimum, maintaining foot and horse trails, excluding elaborate hotels, admitting all responsible packers, promoting good fishing, endeavoring to restore such nearly vanished wild life as the Sierra bighorn, the southern wolverine and the Pacific fisher . . ."—*Harold L. Ickes*, Secretary, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1939.

"Almost unanimous"

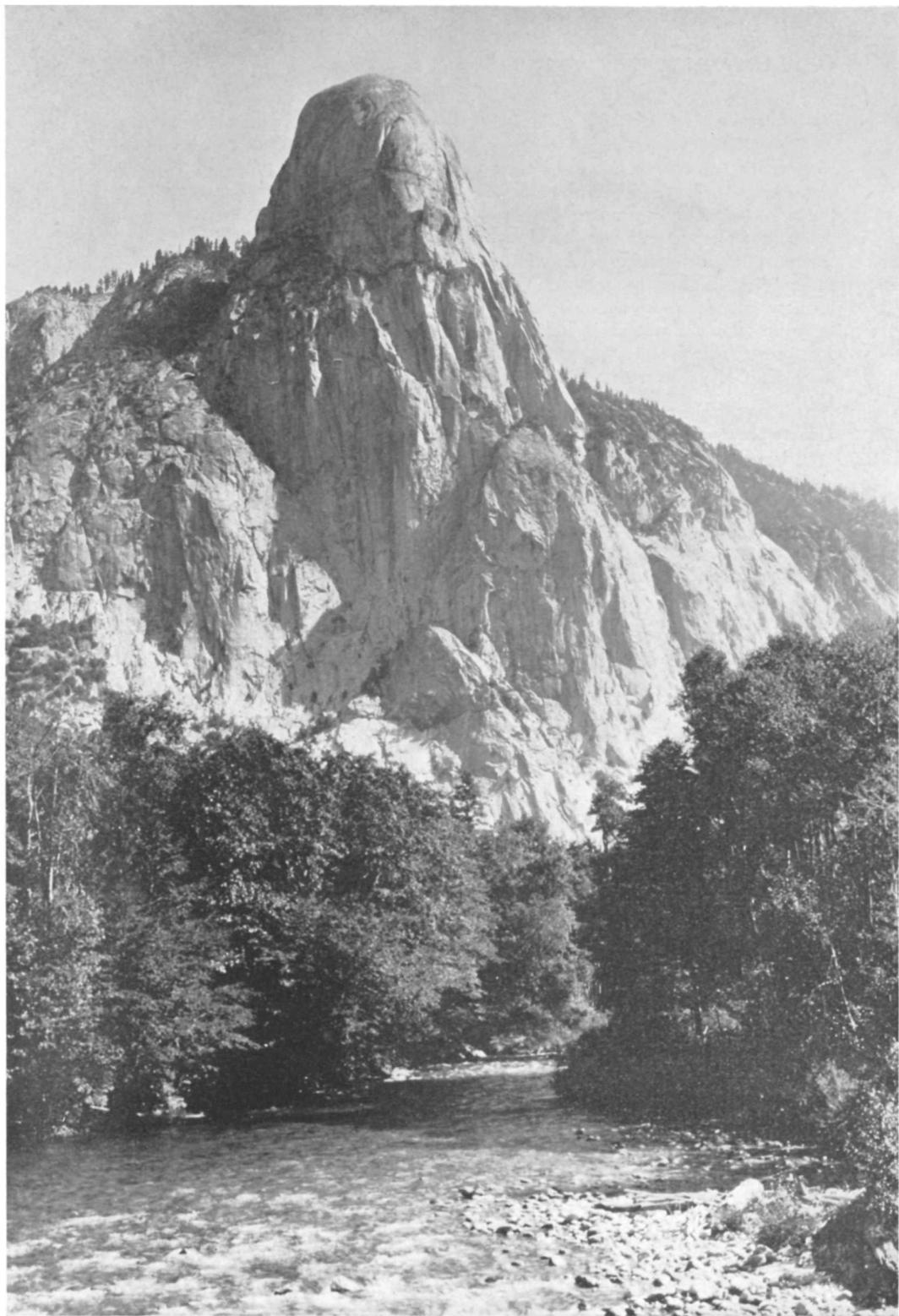
"With the persons closest to the area now almost unanimous in their approval of the National Park plan, the rest of California can back the undertaking with no fears that there are any bugs under the chip."—*Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 1938.

California should rejoice

"If they (the National Parks and Forest Administrations) say the highest value lies in promoting Kings River Park as one of the nation's greatest scenic regions, California should rejoice."—*San Francisco News*, February 15, 1939.

Everything to gain—nothing to lose

"After all, the proposed Park area already is government owned land, and belongs to all the people in the United States, not to Californians alone. . . . This (San Joaquin) Valley has everything to gain and nothing to lose by supporting the John Muir-Kings Canyon Park."—*Fresno Bee*, February 15, 1939.



Tehipite Dome is within the proposed John Muir National Park.

Front cover photograph by R. C. Lewis; all others by Walter L. Huber

Your Support Is Urgently Needed

For the Creation of the JOHN MUIR NATIONAL PARK

This is how you can help:

1. Write or wire your Congressman and both Senators (see list below) and urge your friends to do likewise. Writing to other Congressmen will help.
2. Be sure to write Congressman B. W. Gearhart, who introduced the bill, and Congressman A. J. Elliott, of the House Committee on Public Lands.
3. Interest other organizations in passing resolutions favoring the bill, sending the resolutions to Congress.
4. Urge newspapers and periodicals to publicize the proposed park favorably, with editorials, letters and news items. Forward the publicity to Senators and Representatives in Congress.
5. Send for additional copies of this booklet, distributing them where they will do most good.
6. If you know of persons or organizations who should have this booklet, send their names and addresses to the SIERRA CLUB, 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco.
7. Contributions to aid in the campaign will be gratefully received and will be used to pay for postage, printing, etc.

SENATORS from California (Address U. S. Senate, Washington, D. C.)

Hon. Hiram W. Johnson and Hon. Sheridan Downey

REPRESENTATIVES from California (Address House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.)

District

- 1 HON. CLARENCE F. LEA (Santa Rosa)
- 2 HON. HARRY L. ENGLEBRIGHT
(Nevada City)
- 3 HON. FRANK H. BUCK (Vacaville)
- 4 HON. FRANCK R. HAVENNER
(San Francisco)
- 5 HON. RICHARD J. WELCH
(San Francisco)
- 6 HON. ALBERT E. CARTER (Oakland)
- 7 HON. JOHN H. TOLAN (Oakland)
- 8 HON. JOHN Z. ANDERSON
(San Juan Bautista)
- 9 HON. B. W. GEARHART (Fresno)
- 10 HON. A. J. ELLIOTT (Tulare)

District

- 11 HON. CARL HINSHAW (Pasadena)
- 12 HON. H. JERRY VOORHIS (San Dimas)
- 13 HON. CHARLES KRAMER
(Los Angeles)
- 14 HON. THOMAS F. FORD (Los Angeles)
- 15 HON. JOHN M. COSTELLO
(Hollywood)
- 16 HON. LELAND M. FORD
(Santa Monica)
- 17 HON. LEE E. GEYER (Gardena)
- 18 HON. THOMAS M. EATON
(Long Beach)
- 19 HON. HARRY R. SHEPPARD (Yucaipa)
- 20 HON. ED V. IZAC (San Diego)

Residents of States other than California are requested to write Congressman Gearhart as well as their own Senators and Representatives.

(Over)



Mount Clarence King—typical of the
High Sierra of the proposed John Muir National Park

—Ansel Adams