

## WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS, ST. GEORGE, UTAH

SETTLEMENT FOR BRYCE PARK  
ROAD TROUBLE IS NEAR

Optimistic views were expressed by officials of the state land office Monday over the possibilities of an early solution to the designation of Bryce canyon as a national park area to remove objections raised to construction of the Zion-Mt. Carmel road.

This road is viewed by the Union Pacific and the state highway department as the key unit of the scenic park roads in southern Utah and repeated efforts have been made to have construction start. A letter received recently from Congressman Louis C. Crampton, chairman of the sub-committee on national park appropriations definitely asserts that construction of the road will not be undertaken until Bryce canyon is made a national park.

In 1924 Congress passed an act creating the Utah National park of Bryce canyon and embracing all lands bordering on the rim including the state school section. The Union Pacific through its parks organization, the Utah Parks company, had acquired title to 21,61 acres of land bordering on the rim by purchase from the state and had acquired a lease for 25 years on the balance of the state section with an option to renew this lease for a second 25 year period.

## Willing to Transfer

The act creating a national park area of Bryce canyon provides that it shall not go into effect until all of the private rights within the exterior boundaries of the park have first become the property of the United States. Negotiations are now progressing favorably looking toward the state acquiring title and control of the section to turn it over to the federal government, according to announcements Monday.

A canvass of the situation made it definitely appear that neither the state nor the Union Pacific had any objection to turning these lands over to the federal government if certain conditions were met.

Looking toward a crystallization of public sentiment on the subject Gov. George H. Dern has sent out letters to civic organizations south of Salt Lake and to boards of county commissioners in the southwest asking for an expression on the subject.

The question confronting the land board is whether this school section will be worth more to the state if held than it will benefit the state to convert it into a national park, Governor Dern declared.

Members of the land board are inclined to think that as a national park Bryce canyon would bring in an increased tourist travel and consequently it would be to the best interests of the state to relinquish this school section to the national park service, according to Governor Dern. The board does not however wish to put itself into a position where it would be criticized for giving away a very valuable piece of state property.

H. E. Crockett, secretary of state and Harvey H. Cluff, attorney general, also announced that they could see no valid objection that had developed to date toward meeting the conditions imposed for creating this park area.

John T. Oldroyd, secretary of the board, declared the matter had been taken up at a meeting of the board and that W. D. Sutton of the Pierce-Arrow Transportation company had petitioned the board to use its efforts to see that the national park service would not permit a transportation monopoly to be established if the park act was made operative.

## Roads are Needed

A statement made Monday by George H. Smith, general solicitor of the Union Pacific interests and resident director of the Utah Parks company made it clear that subject to some reasonable conditions the Union Pacific would have no objection to relinquish its rights on the lands.

Mr. Smith declared that "the vital considerations with reference to scenic Utah and the north rim of the Grand canyon now is the development of roads to such an extent as to make access to all these scenic points easy and comfortable over good roads.

"The proposed Mount Carmel road is regarded as the most important remaining link in the highway system. This road would lead directly from Zion park eastward to a connection with the Bryce canyon road and in and of itself would be a scenic attraction that would compare favorably with other attractions in the neighborhood.

The first few miles involve a long tunnel with daylight openings and then a side hill dugway cut out of solid rock in the side of the canyon that of itself is attractive to sight-seers."

## Spent Half Million

And he understands the situation "The Union Pacific interests are willing to join with the state in the proposal to make Bryce a national park and turn over the property to the federal government upon the conditions that the Mount Carmel road will be completed by the government within a period of two years and that the Union Pacific interests, through the Utah Parks company, be given a satisfactory contract or concession for the operation at Bryce."

Mr. Smith declared that the Union Pacific interests have already expended in round numbers \$500,000 in improvements, buildings and the establishment of facilities at Bryce canyon, about \$80,000 of which represents expenditures for the acquisition of water alone which had to be piped some five miles and which is now owned by the Union Pacific independent of the ownership of the land.

## Two Possible Routes

Negotiations for construction of the Zion-Mt. Carmel road have been carried on for the past three years. There was some discussion for a time over two possible routes, one following the Virgin river and the second taking up through the Pine Creek canyon just opposite from the ranger station at the Park entrance and piercing the canyon walls with a series of tunnels and dugways.

In all it is estimated that the project will entail expenditure of about \$3,000,000 by the park service and about \$300,000 by the state road commission for building a connecting road from the border of the park to connect with Mt. Carmel.

Of the latter sum 74 per cent would be federal aid and the balance would be met from gasoline tax surplus now available.

Henry H. Blood, chairman of the state road commission, declared prior to his departure for Reno, Nevada, Saturday, that this outlay was justified to provide a connecting road to join together the big scenic features of southern Utah and northern Arizona.

It is further justified to furnish an all weather road from the rails at Cedar to serve economic interests of the southwest as the present route through the Arizona strip is not satisfactory from either a tourist or an economic standpoint, he said.