

our own civil service people and some LTV contractor staff to give special space lectures in our auditorium to such school age groups. By advance registration, these groups are beginning to make trips from all over Florida and the nearby Southeastern States. Mr. Gordon Harris, the public affairs officer, can probably tell us the maximum number of students we have had on one day.

Mr. HARRIS. About 550 in these groups.

Mr. SIEPERT. The special lecture lasts about 40 minutes and displays various launch vehicle and spacecraft models, and explains their development and the mechanics which govern their flight into space. These lectures are well received. It is, however, as the contractor points out to us, what would be called a loss leader, because this special program idles vehicle equipment and bus escorts while the lecture is presented. But we feel these special arrangements for student age groups are something we ought to do, and do well.

Mr. WAGGONNER. In consolidating the support services, one of the proposals was for reducing the number of contracts from seven to four. You isolated two areas. One was transportation for tours, you were going to detach yourself from this, and go to a separate contractor.

If the Government is going to spend this money and going to charge a reasonable fee for the tours, we are not going to provide the facilities and give somebody a contract to get fat, also?

Mr. SIEPERT. Our present tour experience gives us a good base for gaging what kind of money a concessionaire will make.

Mr. WAGGONNER. You are going to monitor the control and not let him charge what he likes?

Mr. SIEPERT. We control or approve his fee scales, the tour routes, the accuracy of the tour commentaries, and the prices of any products, services, or souvenirs that we approve for sale. We feel this is essential in order that NASA can indeed retain responsibility for the character and quality of the tours.

Mr. PARKER. But the contractor will have to furnish the buses, where the Government is now going in.

Mr. SIEPERT. This is a significant capital investment. The buses to do this job may run into several millions of dollars. That's why we had the General Services Administration initially lease buses on a short-term contract. No operator could take the risk to buy buses for an uncertain and short-term operation.

Mr. WAGGONNER. The attitude prevalent is that it is the taxpayer's dollars; they should be able to see your installation for nothing?

Mr. SIEPERT. Some people feel this way. We do not really believe that it is national policy, with respect to free admittance to national parks and other historical places.

Mr. WAGGONNER. There is now. It's in the law.

Mr. PETRONE. In the tours we have arranged you can drive your own car.

Mr. WAGGONNER. We are rid of that policy. We have a set fee established by Congress for national parks in those areas now.

Mr. SIEPERT. But there is a fee?

Mr. WAGGONNER. Right. Two years old.