

highly favorable comments of those who have preceded me today. I wish to compliment you, Mr. Chairman, on your excellent choice of a site at the Union Station and of your wise provision for adequate parking facilities. New terminal facilities for the forthcoming high-speed trains are further proof of the care and foresight which has gone into the provisions of this bill.

As you may know, in the early 1950's I was Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia and the experience I then acquired with the problems of Washington has given me a deep and lasting interest in the development of our Nation's Capital. In my opinion, the Visitors Center and the project endorsed by the civic groups and presented here today together give our city advantages possessed by no other nation's capital. These two prime improvements are wholly compatible and each augments the other.

I refer again to the maps discussed by Mr. Owen. The center leg which is now under construction, and the proposed underground terminals in the exposition transportation center, will afford an unusual opportunity to relieve traffic congestion and at the same time provide desperately needed new facilities for both interstate and suburban buses. The subway station at Eighth and G Streets and the one at the Visitors Center will be less than 5 minutes apart in traveling time, thereby providing convenient transportation facilities between the two projects.

While none of those who have so far testified have made mention of the growing needs of the airlines, I believe there is a definite probability that as our plans further develop it will be possible to utilize these terminals and the center leg for the future mass transportation of passengers to airfields to board the 500-passenger planes which today are still on the drawing boards.

The idea being they would be assembled there and transported directly in one move to the 500-passenger plane.

The center leg will be connected by underground accesses to the terminals under H and I Streets. This will remove virtually all the interstate buses from the city streets and at least 60 percent of the suburban buses. I know of no other solution to the downtown traffic congestion which could be half as effective.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, for the opportunity of testifying on H.R. 12603, the Visitors Center, and on this project which I am convinced is its natural concomitant.

Mr. GRAY. Thank you, General Prentiss. Your contribution as a member of the Board of Commissioners of the District is well known, and it is refreshing to see someone continue to have an interest in the Capital City. And we deeply appreciate your coming this morning. We appreciate your testimony.

Do I understand that you would support the airlifting of people from the Visitors Center to the outlying airports through scheduled helicopter service from Union Station?

General PRENTISS. That would be a detail that the engineers of your project would have to work out. I was mentioning the transportation of people by bus from the bus terminals to the airports for these 500-passenger planes.

Mr. GRAY. I misunderstood what you said. I knew you mentioned the lifting of people. I thought you meant, when you said lifting, vertical lifting.