

STATEMENT OF STEWART L. UDALL, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR; ACCOMPANIED BY T. SUTTON JETT, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, PARK SERVICE; ROBERT L. PLAVNICK, AIP, URBAN PLANNING CONSULTANT, WASHINGTON, D.C.; SEYMOUR AUERBACH, OF COOPER & AUERBACH, AIA, ARCHITECTS, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Secretary UDALL. Thank you very much.

I have a prepared statement. I would like it to appear in the record, and I will summarize the main points of it, if I may.

Mr. GRAY. Yes, that will be fine.

(Prepared statement follows:)

STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STEWART L. UDALL

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, the Department of the Interior recommends enactment of legislation which would authorize the establishment of Union Station as a National Visitor Center under the administration of this Department. Such action by the Congress would make possible the renovation of historic Union Station and the provision of facilities to assure the visitor a meaningful and inspired stay in his Nation's Capital. The use of Union Station for this purpose is consistent with its monumental character and its location. The McMillan Plan of 1901 envisioned the structure as a gateway to the Nation's Capital from which the visitor sees the historical dome of the United States Capitol Building as he enters the city.

The City of Washington offers an unrivaled variety of sights: the Capitol, White House, Supreme Court, monuments, museums, and parks. Excellent lodging, dining, shopping, entertainment and recreation facilities are offered. But above all, to our citizens Washington is the heart of the Nation, for here is located the seat of the Federal Government; here the Nation's leadership copes with the major problems; here significant decisions of national and international importance are made. To visit Washington is to sense the excitement of today and to see the lasting evidence of our heritage.

In November 1966, the Congress created a Study Commission to make a full and complete investigation and study of sites and plans to provide facilities and services for visitors and students coming to the Nation's Capital. I had the honor to serve as Chairman of this Study Commission. Serving with me on this Commission were six members of the House of Representatives, including the distinguished Chairman of your sub-committee, the Honorable Kenneth J. Gray; six members of the United States Senate; and a number of distinguished citizen representatives.

The Study Commission divided itself into three subcommittees. The Subcommittee to Consider a Site or Sites, Chaired by Representative Gray of Illinois, studied a number of sites where such a Visitor Center might be located. It was the view of the subcommittee, and the full Commission, that the projected increase in visitation to this city over the next 15 years would require more than one facility to meet the demand of the millions of visitors from the United States and abroad. The Subcommittee on Information and Interpretive Programs, chaired by Representative Fred Schwengel of Iowa, and the Subcommittee on Transportation and Parking, chaired by Senator Joseph D. Tydings of Maryland, also gave much time and attention to these aspects of visitor accommodations and their reports to full Commission were also approved.

Information has been gained also from experiments conducted in recent years by the National Park Service of this Department. Kiosks were placed at strategic points in the monumental area to provide information for the visitor. Information stations were placed along major highways entering Washington for a six-week period to determine visitor use of such facilities and the types of information they requested. During the fall of 1966, a six-week experiment was conducted with an interpretive shuttle transportation service in the Mall area. A general orientation program on the Nation's Capital, the Washington Briefings for Young Americans, developed at the suggestion of the Vice President, were presented as pilot programs at the Departmental Auditorium. In each experiment, records were made of the type of questions asked, the information and service provided, and the reaction of the visitors.