

Moreover, during 1966, we invited a group of business and civic leaders to work with us in improving the visitor experience in Washington. Information gained from interviews with these citizens and other authorities in Washington familiar with the problems of visitors, both from the point of view of seeing the many important places in the Nation's Capital and from the point of view of the interest of the business community, has also been utilized in assessing the Visitor Center question.

There were approximately ten million visitors in Washington in 1965 for education and pleasure. In 1976, attendance in excess of eighteen million may be expected. Daily attendance even now may vary from a low of 8,500 to a high of 65,000; however, during the busy April through August period, the daily attendance varies from a low of 30,000 to a high of 138,000, with holiday or special event peaks of approximately 150,000. Visitor center facilities of great magnitude are clearly needed.

Mr. Chairman, the National Visitor Center Study Commission has prepared to report to the Congress as required by the act of November 7, 1966. The report summarizes the studies already made of the need for a National Visitor Center in the Nation's Capital. Union Station was the choice of the full Commission for a major Visitor Center. In the long-range plan it offers an unusually favorable opportunity to launch a program to meet the critical need of providing better visitor service in the Capital City. The Commission has also employed a consulting firm to study improvements to the Union Station area which would make it suitable for a National Visitor Center and provide adjacent parking accommodations. These consultants are present and have with them architectural drawings showing how the Union Station might be treated to provide these services. The drawings also show the recommended parking structure which is to be located over the tracks to the north of Union Station.

Thank you very much.

Secretary UDALL. I would also point out, Mr. Chairman, that the Visitor Center Study Commission had a mandate to make a report to the Congress. We have done that and I am sure the committee, if it has not already done so, will want to make that official report a part of the record.

Mr. GRAY. Yes. Mr. Secretary, it will be printed in its entirety in the record.

Secretary UDALL. Mr. Chairman, I should like to, before beginning, commend in particular the chairman of this subcommittee, and also the gentleman sitting at his right, who is an old friend of mine, for their leadership and keen interest in the effort that not only made the legislation possible to set up the National Visitor Center Study Commission, but the very fine work that was done implementing this study.

I think all of us who live in Washington are aware of the fact that in terms of providing the right kind of facilities for the citizens of this country and the citizens of the world who come to this great Capital to see its public places, its monuments, its places of historic interest, many of us have commented how inadequate the present facilities are, how frustrating it often is for the visitor. And I think all of the members of the Study Commission had a very strong feeling that with the right kind of Visitor Center keyed in with a transportation system, shuttle bus or minibus, whatever you want to call it, that we could tackle this job and make visiting of this Nation's Capital a delight.

I think that seeing Washington should be fun; it shouldn't be frustrating. I think the American people who come here should be able to understand what they are seeing, because a Visitor Center is an educational endeavor if it is done right. We are not only explaining where things are, but we are interpreting them; we are helping people understand the history of their country and understanding the