

"Travel Gap" through complicated legislation and restrictive taxes on American travelers.

A good job has been done in the past six years in increasing the number of foreign visitors to our shores. In 1967, we had an increase of tourists to this country of 30% with a total increase of 125% in the number of visitors to the U.S.A. in the past six years. It is reliably reported that foreign visitors to this country spent 1,850 billion dollars in 1967. The increase of our own travel abroad in 1967 was only 14%, less than half of the increase of travel to this country.

This increase is in the face of the fact that the present budget for the United States Travel Service is at a low ebb, with four of their already too few offices about to be closed. The richest country in the world is currently spending approximately three million dollars to sell people on the ideas of visiting America. In contrast, Spain, not notably a big spender, invests 10 million dollars annually to attract tourists to the Iberian Peninsula. The United Kingdom and Argentina each spends in excess of seven billion dollars; Ireland, Mexico and France spend between six and seven million dollars, while Italy, India and Greece each invest between three and one-half and four and one-half million dollars annually to attract visitors to their countries.

I urge that as a first step we put American dollars and American ingenuity to work to attract more and more visitors to the United States. We are the richest nation in the world both in natural resources and merchandising know-how. But, Gentlemen, we cannot extend the glad hand of welcome of the United States to foreign visitors while we are, with the other hand, slamming the door shut in the face of Americans who wish to travel abroad.

The United States Travel Service must be implemented with professional travel skills. This organization has done a commendable job. But it has done so without wide spread specific tour programs, so essential to the success of this type of venture. We in the United States have a great reservoir of advertising, promotion, sales and marketing skills which can be put to work abroad to ensure the success of selling America. I urge that leading American travel experts be enlisted to work with the U.S. Travel Service to design specific all-expense programs to be marketed by wholesale and retail travel agencies in the more affluent foreign lands. We must simultaneously increase our own facilities for handling of foreign visitors, a point on which we are currently abysmally weak. In Europe, except in the most remote rural areas, there is no hotel so poor and no facility so inadequate that it does not have multi-lingual personnel to ease the lot of foreign visitors. Few hotels, or facilities, outside of New York City and Washington, D.C., are so equipped in the United States. We have few multi-lingual or even bilingual personnel in the United States to cope with an influx of visitors from abroad. This entire sad situation must be rectified immediately.

We in the travel industry can and will be of great assistance to the United States Travel Service. My colleagues and I are all willing and anxious to do everything humanly possible to close the travel gap by equalling the two-way flow of travelers and thus equalling the flow of dollars.

To further close the travel gap, I urge that we seek the means to make full utilization of the 1.4 billion dollars of non-restrictive foreign currencies now in the Treasury for use by Americans abroad and undertake a searching review of the possibility of using the additional 1.6 billion dollars in counterpart funds for this same purpose.

In conclusion, may I point out, Gentlemen, the Supreme Court ruled in 1958 that freedom of travel is a basic right of the American people. Let us not forge an American Iron Curtain, let us not build an American Berlin Wall. Instead, let us build up the United States Travel Service, let us infuse that organization with skilled travel people to merchandise the United States of America in foreign lands, let us increase the flow of foreigners to America at a rate that will far exceed the percentage of increase of our own travelers going abroad.

I respectfully request that the bill under consideration not be reported from this Committee. Let us not subject ourselves to the shame of public debate on restricting the freedom of movement of the American people.

Mr. OLSON. I have been in the travel business since 1929. Olson Travel Organization sells package tours throughout the world; Campus Tours, Inc., sells student tours to Europe.

There seems to be some confusion as to the function of the travel agent, the tour wholesaler, and the contents of a package tour.