

enjoy a public use project that I think was intended to be public use. I have visited some of these projects, particularly those conducted by the Interior Department and to use the excuse that they have improved recreational areas with toilet facilities and restrooms and things of that kind is a complete misnomer.

I have in mind the Wichita Wildlife Refuge in my own State I visited not long ago where I find they are charging a dollar fee for use of toilet facilities, to use WPA-constructed toilets that were dirty, unsanitary, ill-kept, and unattractive.

The other picnic areas, so-called improved areas, were scattered with refuse and dirt, and boxes and lunchbaskets, and things of that kind, which certainly did not rank as a chargeable facility or special services given to them.

We are collecting, shall I say, a very heavy tax of 6 cents a gallon on all gasoline, on all oil and on rubber tires on our automobiles. May I say this is for the Interstate Highway System. I support that; I think it is correct. But bear in mind the hundreds of thousands of automobiles that go to these recreational areas, travel a large portion—it is not a major portion—of the distance from the user's home to the recreational area on noninterstate highways.

So, this fee is also being charged and I think should be considered as a part of the public contribution to the use of these facilities because it would amount to more at 6 cents a gallon than is being collected from them now as an automobile tax as they enter the gate or go into the recreational area around a Corps of Engineers project.

To my mind, these projects were constructed through public funds and belong and should belong to the public. I believe that the operation and maintenance of these projects for the use of the public is a trust given by Congress to the American public and constitutes a vested right. The public funds were derived from our process of taxation and continuing efforts are being made to get continuing funds for these projects by various methods stated in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

I refer to the motorboat fuels tax, which equally affects users. It is not a matter of taking from Peter to pay Paul. The collections of these fees makes it a matter of taking from both the left and right pockets for the same service, and I am against it.

I am advised that the Corps of Engineers has shown by its own figures in a great number of cases the cost of collecting fees and charges exceed return. To me, it is just not double taxation but triple taxation. I do not think that the American people should be subject to it. Besides the figure aspects of this picture there is another area that I believe warrants consideration of this committee. That is the antagonism brought about by the collection of fees.

In the case of Oklahoma, many of our guests travel great distances to make use of our waters. They bring with them their boats, families, their influence, and their needs. To insult them by the collection of unnecessary, unfeasible charges to use those facilities, which they have a right to expect will be granted to them free of charge, can only result in the reduction of a number of users of our facilities and a corresponding reduction in the amount Oklahoma will realize in value received from this traveling trade.