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ADDRESS OF SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STEWART L. UDALL AT THE FIRST WORLD CONFERENCE ON PARKS AT SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, JULY 4, 1962

In the final months of his life, as World War II drew to its close, a great President of my country who loved the land, Franklin D. Roosevelt, exchanged letters with his friend, Gifford Pinchot, a pioneer American conservationist. Pinchot urged Roosevelt to strike a positive note at the end of the war by persuading other leaders to join him in convening a World Conference on the conservation of natural resources. But because men were preoccupied at the time in creating international political institutions designed to enhance world order, this splendid idea did not come to fruition.

Yet as each intervening year has passed, the peoples of the world have become more deeply involved in the common cause of conservation of resources. The earth is our home, and we share responsibility for the management of our environment and the preservation of its values--this fact must be the starting point of a conference of this kind. The air that we breathe is common air, the seas at our borders are common seas. Even as advances in transportation and communication have drawn us closer together, our use of resources too has tended to unite us as one world. Agreements based on the mutual cooperation and mutual advantage of sovereign nations already control pollution of the sea and plans under which we harvest most of its creatures. Minerals and food and fibre are shipped from this land to that--one nation's surplus is another's shortage, and the inevitable sweep of history is making us increasingly dependent upon the practices of stewardship and husbandry which countries and peoples follow.

Thus it is most fitting that we have gathered together in this international conference to discuss the preservation of national parks, and nature reserves for these places of splendor are a precious world resource. The perspective of space exploration has tended to unify the geography of the earth, and lends a new vision as we consider new standards and new goals for the preservation of nature. Natural treasures are in reality a heritage of all mankind. They transcend provincial boundaries. They are a gift to those who prize the natural world and its healing influence.

I would like to think that this conference strikes a wholesome note of sanity in a troubled world. It is a sign that men are questioning the false gods of materialism, and are coming to realize that the natural world lies at the very center of an environment that is both life-giving and life-promoting. There is hope in this meeting, or so it seems to me, that the values of the spirit are reasserting their primacy--and this in turn gives fresh hope in other vital areas of human endeavor.

This idea of dedicating choice tracts is seemingly as old as civilization itself. It was Justinian, the great Roman lawgiver, who laid down the principle that the beaches and shorelines belonged to all of the people.

Each generation must act anew to revise its conservation ethic, and to establish new plans for the wise use of its resources. The concept of conservation is old, but the problems that we now face are more urgent than ever. In our search for a higher standard of living, we have developed new needs and a dynamic and awesome technology to satisfy them. With this technology we are daily altering the face of the earth, and in the process the intimate relationships between men and their land are also being altered--often at the sacrifice of paramount human values.

So great is the power of men and nations to enlarge the machine-dominated portion of the world that it is not an exaggeration to say that few opportunities for conservation projects of grand scope will remain by the year 2000. Let me put the case even stronger: with few exceptions the places of superior scenic beauty, the unspoiled landscapes, the spacious refuges for wildlife, the nature parks and nature reserves of significant size and grandeur that our generation saves will be all that is preserved. We are the architects who must design the remaining temples; those who follow will have the mundane tasks of management and housekeeping.

The hour is late, the opportunities diminish with each passing year, and we must establish here a Common Market of conservation knowledge which will enable us to achieve our highest goals and broadest purposes. With each day that passes the natural world shrinks as we exert greater artificial control over our environment. The lot of many men has been improved, but few of us would deny that there have been grievous human losses as well.

I daresay all of us gathered here would agree that nature-islands of solitude and repose are an indispensable ingredient of modern civilization. Save for homesites, parkland uses are the highest human uses to which land may be put.

Yet, as we look ahead in this country and (your problems necessarily correspond with our own) we are faced with the fact that during the adult life of our children the demand for municipal parks and playgrounds will increase fourfold. There has been a 290 percent increase in wilderness recreation over the last decade, and during the 40 years separating us from the 21st Century, the demand for wilderness and seashore parks will be an estimated 10 times greater than it is today. But as the need increases, land and forest and water are being preempted for other uses.

However, technology is not the only threat--the only challenge--that confronts us. It is the uncontrolled growth of population that will surely and finally alter the man-land relationships on all of our continents unless our statecraft takes cognizance of this problem. The demographers now tell us, in measured tones, that the world population will double every thirty-five years--and double again every thirty-five thereafter--unless something intervenes to break their projections.

What is the significance of this staggering statistic for us, the parkmen of the world? I need hardly spell out the consequences for this audience, but we must inform the world that if this occurs congestion--with all the unlovely overtones of that too-familiar word--will be the be-all and the end-all of our lives, our nature reserves will be steadily sacrificed to the demands of progress--and park and wilderness experiences will be rationed out among the fortunate few.

At the recent White House Conference on Conservation, called by President Kennedy, Dr. Walter W. Heller, chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisors, asked this rhetorical question: "What good is an increased gross national product if we in the process of producing it chew up, destroy, desecrate so many of the values, so many of the enjoyments which really add up to the improvements in human well-being and in the quality of life that we seek?"

There can be little argument, these days, in highly industrialized countries over the damage to living values as the result of pollution of air and water, overcrowded housing, inadequate places for outdoor recreation, and a surfeit of artificial things. It is not surprising that some men have a moral and spiritual sickness that results from being on the earth, yet not a part of it. In an era of noise and pollution and jostle and blight, it is not hard to predict that our children will place as high a value on the right of solitude in the out-of-doors, and the right of access to places of natural beauty, as they now accord to the right of free speech and the right to a trial by one's peers.

Yet we have learned in this country (as I daresay many other nations have learned of late) that the preservation of land and wildlife resources is not only a happy ideal, but also a highly practical investment. At the turn of this century conservation was a protest against policies of waste in the United States. Now nearly all of our leaders of industry take pride in their conservation practices. You who are here today are keenly aware of the fact that any proposal for expending tax monies for park purposes will be weighed on a scale of dollars and cents, and parkmen are constantly on the defensive before the planners of public budgets.

However, in my own country it has become abundantly clear that national parks are not only sound social investments, but sound use of public funds as well. Time and time again citizens adjacent to new parks have bemoaned the loss of revenues from resources "locked up" inside a new reserve--taxes lost, uncut timber, undiscovered minerals, unharvested game--only to learn later that the income from providing services to visitor-tourists has equalled or surpassed whatever sums might have been gained exploiting these park resources.

Travel is one of the wonders of our age, and it is easy to foresee that, for example, East Africa will be only a day's flight away from New York and London and Moscow a few years from now. Without straining your credulity in the least, I can predict that if Tanganyika and Kenya and Uganda maintain their unique game preserves--which are the envy of us all--the world's travelers will add far more to their economic growth than would any alternate use of these lands.

But nature reserves involve far more than tourism as an economic potential: the watershed values, science laboratory values, and esthetic values must also be weighed in the scales. The pages of history are littered with wrecks of ships of state which have foundered because natural laws were ignored. The Gobi, Mesopotamia and other areas which were once the cradle of civilization had their fertility reduced to dust because of human improvidence. We know now that up-river forests and downriver cultivation will produce more crops than a land completely cultivated but without water-shed protection. We know also that our wildlands form the only perfect wildlife habitat, and constitute an irreplaceable science laboratory where we can measure the world in its natural balance against the world in its man-made imbalance.

Opening an atlas, one is impressed by the magnitude of our opportunity. Mountains, beaches, river estuaries, tropical jungle, tundra, coral atoll and pampas are a heritage for all men, and samples of them merit protection for all time.

Great strides have already been made toward preservation of some of these world's wonders, both by individual nations and, increasingly, through international cooperation. Poland and Czechoslovakia have jointly established a national park for the benefit of their mutual citizenry. The United States, Canada, and Mexico have for years worked together in protecting migratory birds on their seasonal routes from North to South. The United States, Canada, and the U.S.S.R. have long cooperated to restore the fur seal herds of the Pribilof Islands.

This consideration of international protection can take ultimate encouragement from what is happening in the farthest southern reaches where the twelve nations signatory to the Antarctic Treaty have included conservation protection of natural species among their primary areas of mutual consideration.

This initial World Conference on National Parks is a meeting ground in which the mutual interests of its participants is a reliable bond for strong communication and future action. Whatever differences of ethnology, geography, and traditions are represented here, we are bound together by the universal challenge to honor, dedicate, and maintain significant natural areas around the globe.

No feature of the globe has more cultural significance than our great oceans. Man from every nation has gone down to the sea in ships to try himself against the elements and to seek not only adventure but a livelihood. The sea has helped form our character and it has sustained our lives. Every sea-touched country has the opportunity to preserve for its people portions of shoreline with the unique opportunities which they hold for human refreshment and restoration of the soul.

If you have not walked the sands of the nearby Olympic National Park Ocean Strip, I commend it to you as an experience not to be forgotten. There one can stand with thundering Pacific rollers on the one side, and the impenetrable temperate rain forests on the other. In a few hundred yards of horizontal distance the greatest contrasts of nature provide the excitement characteristic of a frontier edge. This is but one of many shoreline areas to be found in every part of the globe whose beauty and wholesome naturalness deserve our best efforts of protection for the years to come.

Another priceless element of the outdoor heritage are the great river estuaries which have long been key centers of our civilization. Today, the Lido at Venice in the estuary of the Po provides an outstanding example of the extraordinary beauty of this type of natural setting.

The land as well as the sea has its matchless values in nature's ageless splendors. Today, hundreds of thousands of people climb, ski, and hike across the surface of the great mountains of the earth, and I personally can testify to the soul-satisfying rewards to be found in these quiet and remote areas. Last autumn I had the rare opportunity of joining members of the Alpine Club of Japan on the pilgrimage to the summit of Mount Fujiyama. This slender volcanic cone has been a guardian over the affairs of Honshu since before the Ainu crossed to the island shores. In the snow and wind at the summit I felt for a moment the eternal spirit of the Japanese people. We must act so that our children's children can also enjoy the highest outdoor experiences now available to us.

At the same time, in our search for harmony with the earth, we must give equal thought and consideration to the animals, the birds, and fish which share our planet.

At the recent meeting of the World Wildlife Fund in New York, Prince Philip of the United Kingdom likened our situation today to that of the Great Flood. When it was threatened, Noah, at the Lord's command, constructed an ark of sufficient size to provide protection and survival for all of the animals, two by two. Today the threatening flood has a different guise, but its threat is just as real. If we, too, move in time to take protective action, the conservation leaders of this generation may well become the Noahs of the 20th Century.

Not the least of our tasks is that of creating a new sense of values in the nations which we represent. Conservation begins with education, and past experience makes it plain that public men will not lead unless a conservation conscience is developed which prizes the choice things of nature. In the crowded countries, zoning regulations and requirements will be a prime conservation tool, and in the time ahead we are certain to hear much more about such things as scenic easements and conservation zoning.

In other less crowded countries the conservation battle will be won only if men with a sense of mission awaken their fellow men to the outdoor opportunities which are fast vanishing.

We must, if we are wise, establish an exchange program of conservation thinkers and planners. Nothing gives greater satisfaction to the American people than an opportunity to share the knowledge of their landscape architects, park interpreters, management specialists, biologists, and ecologists. Economists and planners can forecast the effects of park establishment within a regional community. Foresters, agriculturists, and hydrologic specialists can study and advise on efficient methods of land and water utilization.

All nations developing park or wildlife preserve programs must have staffs of trained scientists and administrators. Education in school curricula is of first importance, and in this regard I would like also to stress the possibility of technical schools where experts can teach the techniques and rationale of land management to local people for immediate field application.

One measure toward our goal is the fact that we have started a new section within the National Park Service to handle international coordination, and this function will be increasing in responsibility. I envision the day soon when park management personnel will be exchanged between countries of the Northern and Southern Hemispheres in order to assist and learn from each other's busy summer seasons.

In the end, each country must develop the kind of park or nature reserve system that suits the needs and aspirations of its people--and the economics of its land base. Each nation has pioneering work to do; each has something to teach--and much to learn.

If we are to cope with the enormous problems of the modern societies of which we are a part, we must establish a Common Market of conservation knowledge and endeavor.

In this regard, I would like to remind the delegates here of this nation's Peace Corps which already represents one of our finest exports of knowledge and good will. The Corps is anxious to serve in conservation and wildlife management capacities, and it is ready to give immediate and sympathetic consideration to proposed projects in these areas.

Actually, many nations in many parts of the world can take pride in the great strides already made toward preservation of unspoiled areas of matchless natural beauty and inspiration--and of the continuing progress now under way. We in this country only last year made another significant addition to our National Park System with the establishment of a magnificent National Seashore Park on the ocean sands of Cape Cod, close to the congested population centers of our eastern States, representing the first such addition in decades.

In Europe, the progress in recent years has been most heartening. Before 1945 there were no national parks in England; today there are ten. In Germany the only park for the preservation of nature was the Luneburger Heide; today there are eight parks and in West Germany alone twenty-four more are planned.

On another continent--Africa--it is interesting to note that the greatest impetus to the creation of fully protected areas came from a gathering not dissimilar to this--the International Convention on Parks held in London in 1933. The inspired people who attended that conference designed what are still accepted as the basic rules for preservation. However, it was not until after the cruel years of World War II that East Africa could effectively attempt to set aside areas as parks and for the protection of wildlife.

In the intervening years, every endeavor has been made in the British territories of East Africa to establish national parks; there has been marked achievement in the Congo toward the establishment of large Strict Natural Reserves; and in other countries of Africa progress is being made toward setting aside portions of national parks as wildlife sanctuaries and as undisturbed breeding areas for the natural flora and fauna.

In Tanganyika, the Serengeti National Park, established in 1948, though subjected to certain boundary alterations, remains one of the finest game

sanctuaries in the world. Meanwhile, plans have reached a final stage for the transformation of a fascinating crater on the foothills of Tanganyika's Mount Meru into a national park. Here, from the rim, a visitor cannot escape the impression that he is looking into a section of another planet. This crater, fringed with primeval forest, is the natural sanctuary for elephant, rhino and buffalo, and, due to its proximity to the flourishing town of Arusha, will be a great asset, in addition to the famous Serengeti, to the Territory of Tanganyika.

In Australia, the credit for having pioneered the development of national parks must go to Queensland and Tasmania, two of that nation's least populated states. Outstanding examples of the accomplishments there are the Lamington National Park, a spendid area of sub-tropical mountain scenery and vegetation near the Queensland-New South Wales border, and the beautiful sub-tropical islands along the unique Great Barrier Reef. The State of Victoria has recently followed the example set by Queensland and Tasmania in establishing a National Parks Authority responsible to the Premier under a new National Parks Act. The national parks dedicated so far include a fairly wide range of Victorian environments and more are presently under consideration. Probably most widely known of Victoria's existing preserved areas is the Wilson's Promontory National Park, embracing a rugged peninsula at the extreme south of the State.

In Japan, certain localities have long been popular among the people as pleasure resorts, such as the so-called "Three Scenic Spots"--Matsushima, Ama-no-hasidate, and Miyajima. In the Meiji Era, these places for the first time were regarded as "parks" on a democratic basis.

The concept was placed on a legislative basis in 1873 when a Cabinet ordinance was issued providing for the establishment of parks on state-owned lands. In compliance with the ordinance, local scenic areas were gradually designated as parks, chiefly as prefectural or provincial reservations, and the public began to take a deep interest in them. After the Meiji Era, under the influence of the federal parks in the United States, voices began to be raised calling for the establishment of a Japanese national parks system. After a long period of investigation and public education, the National Parks Law was enacted in 1931.

As a result, nineteen areas have so far been designated as national parks where natural beauty is preserved and the people are offered an opportunity for pleasure and recreation. These areas now play an important role in the national life and contribute much to international tourism.

I have only begun to touch--and have omitted much--on an inventory of outstanding global achievements in the fast awakening and growing movement to keep something of the land intact in its natural state so that there may be refreshment of the soul and spirit for the peoples of the world now and in future centuries. But enough has been mentioned to show both progress and beckoning new opportunities awaiting all of us.

The objectives are clear--the air is electric with challenge. In the words of President Kennedy, "Let us begin."

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