

Letters

California Redwoods:

Congress Debates Park Acreage

For more than 2 years the preservation of some of California's giant redwood trees in a national park has been debated in Congress. The fate of the redwoods, one way or another, will probably be determined within the next 2 months. Last October the Senate Interior Committee reported out a compromise bill, S. 2515, which subsequently passed and is now pending before the House Interior Committee. Bill S. 2515 authorizes a two-unit 61,654-acre (25,000-hectare) national park. The north unit is in Del Norte County and consists of Jedediah Smith and Del Norte Coast State Parks plus 11,150 acres of land in private ownership. The south unit is in Humboldt County and consists of Prairie Creek State Park plus 22,474 acres of privately owned land. Of the 33,330 acres of virgin timber within the proposed boundaries of the national park, 20,300 acres or 61 percent comes from the three state parks. Similarly, 45 percent of the total land comes from the state parks. Thus, only 13,030 acres of virgin timber now in private ownership will be afforded protection under this bill.

Conservationists believe that the Senate bill can be greatly improved by revision of the boundaries to include a minimum of 72,000 acres, and there is a reasonable prospect that this acreage can be purchased within the \$100-million appropriation limit set by the Senate bill. The Senate Interior Committee has considerably overestimated the price of redwood stumpage.

Even if the boundaries are expanded to include 72,000 acres, only 20,710 acres of virgin timber now in private hands will be preserved instead of the 34,400 acres that would have been saved under the Sierra Club's original 90,000-acre park proposal. Even with these proposed additions, then, this park would still be a great compromise.

At the House Interior Committee field hearings in California in April of this year, two principal arguments were made against the very small park pro-

posed in the Senate bill. The lumber companies and other special interest groups argued that the park would mean economic doom. Several committee members, including Chairman Aspinall (D-Colo.), indicated they felt the nation could not afford the cost of the park.

The fact is that all of the privately owned timber within the boundaries of the Senate bill is but a 1 year's supply for the existing sawmills of Humboldt and Del Norte counties. All of the timber in the areas which conservationists want added to the Senate's park proposal constitutes less than a 6 months' supply of timber for these mills. Clearly, if the lumber companies were practicing sustained-yield logging (which they are not), the park would have no adverse effect on the local economy. Since they are not logging on a sustained-yield basis, the lumber industry in these counties will soon suffer a decline regardless of the park.

For Congressmen to argue that we cannot afford to preserve 1 percent of the redwood forests we inherited in a national park that would be 1/35th the size of Yellowstone borders on the ludicrous. Last year this same Congress passed one of the largest public works appropriation bills in the nation's history—\$4.6 billion, of which \$1.6 billion went to the Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation. The total cost of the redwood park is but 2 percent of 1 year's expenditures for the space program or equal to what we are spending in Vietnam every 36 hours. One can only speculate on what future generations will think of our system of priorities.

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LSD and Marihuana:

Where Are the Answers?

In his editorial "LSD and marihuana" (15 Mar., p. 1189) Abelson is to be commended for his indictment of the mass media and their effect on the

spread of psychedelic drug abuse. Young people have the message that these drugs are closely interwoven with sex and fun, two other aspects of our lives which are used in all manner of entertainment and advertising.

The increased use of marihuana by a large segment of our population is another matter. This is not limited to the teenager or college student or "hippy" types. Many people are using marihuana as a relaxant or as a form of recreation in much the same manner that alcohol is used by others. These people include college professors, doctors, lawyers, business men, and school teachers.

In the literature in the United States a few cases of temporary psychosis have been reported following acute intoxication with marihuana. The LaGuardia Commission reported three such cases in its experiment, with the conclusion "that given the potential personality make-up and the right time and environment, marihuana may bring on a true psychotic state" (1). The large increase in the use of marihuana in recent years has produced few such cases, which Becker attributes to a better understanding of the drug effects in the subculture which serves to introduce newcomers to the drug (2).

According to Murphy, "As with alcohol, it is quite difficult to distinguish the longer-term effects of cannabis use for the personality traits or changes which would have been present whether the drug had been used or not" (3). In Mayer-Gross's opinion "The chronic hashish psychoses described by earlier observers have proved to be cases of schizophrenia complicated by symptoms of cannabis intoxication" (4). Allentuck states, "a characteristic cannabis psychosis does not exist. Marijuana will not produce a psychosis *de novo* in a well-integrated, stable person" (5). And Murphy writes: "The prevalence of major mental disorder among cannabis users appears to be little, if any higher than that in the general population" (3).

If one wishes to deter young people from experimenting with drugs they should do it by investigating and reporting the reason people feel the need to escape or alter reality through intoxicating or psychoactive drugs. This includes alcohol, barbiturates, amphetamines, and "tranquilizers" as well as the psychedelic drugs. Perpetuating myths or using scare techniques will only make them more inquisitive about the drugs or more resistive to giving up