

act of August 9, 1916.<sup>1</sup> In fact no officer of the National Park Service has yet been able to visit the park and no plans have been made for its improvement. Officers of the Forest Service assigned to duty in the surrounding national forests have protected the park from fire and given such other consideration to it as was practicable and consistent with the performance of their duties.

The forest supervisor reports that 8,500 people visited the park during this season. Many motorists visited Mount Lassen while touring the parks of the Pacific Coast States. It is accessible from the California State highways and from the Southern Pacific Railroad. No concessions for transportation of passengers from the railroad or for the accommodation of tourists in the park have yet been granted. Accommodations are now provided for tourists by owners of patented lands within the park boundaries.

It is essential that funds be provided for the administration of Lassen Volcanic Park as a part of the park system. It has many wonderful scenic features and interesting volcanic formations. There are numerous lakes and streams well stocked with fish, and the forest growth of the park is especially worthy of note. The volcano has shown some activity during the year, but there have been no violent eruptions.

#### YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

*1917 report*

In the Yosemite National Park during the past year there has been improvement in every direction; improvement in roads and trails, improvement in accommodations for visitors and facilities for travel in the park by the erection of new hotels and camps and the installation of additional transportation service; and improvement in camp grounds, public utilities, and sanitation system. There has been a general increase in tourist patronage and an astonishing increase in motor-car travel. There have been larger appropriations by Congress for general purposes than ever before, and the revenues have been larger, thus making the consummation of much-needed improvement work possible. The year 1917 has been one of the most important years of Yosemite history.

#### FINE NEW HOTEL ON GLACIER POINT.<sup>2</sup>

Probably the most important project to be completed this year was the erection, furnishing, and opening of the new Glacier Point Hotel on the rim of the famous valley. This hotel was completed during the winter and formally opened to the public early in July. It is beautifully located on the very rim of the gorge where a magnificent view may be obtained of all of the great canyons through which the Merced and its tributaries flow. Vernal and Nevada Falls are plainly visible and the panorama of the peaks of the Sierra that may be had from the hotel beggars description. The hotel itself is very attractive from every point of view. It is equipped with every modern convenience; even electric energy for lighting is transmitted from the power plant in the valley below.

The new hotel was constructed by the Desmond Park Service Co., the general concessioner operating under franchises from the depart-

<sup>1</sup> 39 Stats., 442.

<sup>2</sup> See pictures in this report.

ment covering the establishment of a complete system of hotels, camps, transportation service, and other facilities for the accommodation of the traveling public. During the year this company added materially to its transportation equipment. It suffered one reverse in the loss of the dining room and lobby of its El Capitan Camp on the floor of the valley as the result of a fire. Merced Lake, Tuolumne Soda Springs, and Tenaya Lake Lodges, in the high Sierra, were operated during the summer. Two of these high mountain lodges were well patronized. Tuolumne Soda Springs Lodge, however, seems to have been poorly located and received little patronage, so was closed early, with a view to effecting its removal to a more advantageous site.

Conditions attributable directly to the war with Germany made the construction of the new hotel on the floor of the Yosemite Valley impossible, but the establishment of this much-needed enterprise will be undertaken as soon in the future as it is possible to make the necessary financial and other arrangements. Until this hotel project is completed, the old Sentinel Hotel will be retained. Before the opening of the next season, however, its accommodations will be greatly improved.

In addition to the Glacier Point Hotel and the lodges in the high Sierra, the general concessioner operated Camp Ahwahnee, Camp Yosemite Falls, and Camp El Capitan, all on the floor of the valley, and Crocker's resort on the Big Oak Flat road. Considerably more than a half million dollars has been expended in permanent improvements in the park by this concessioner.

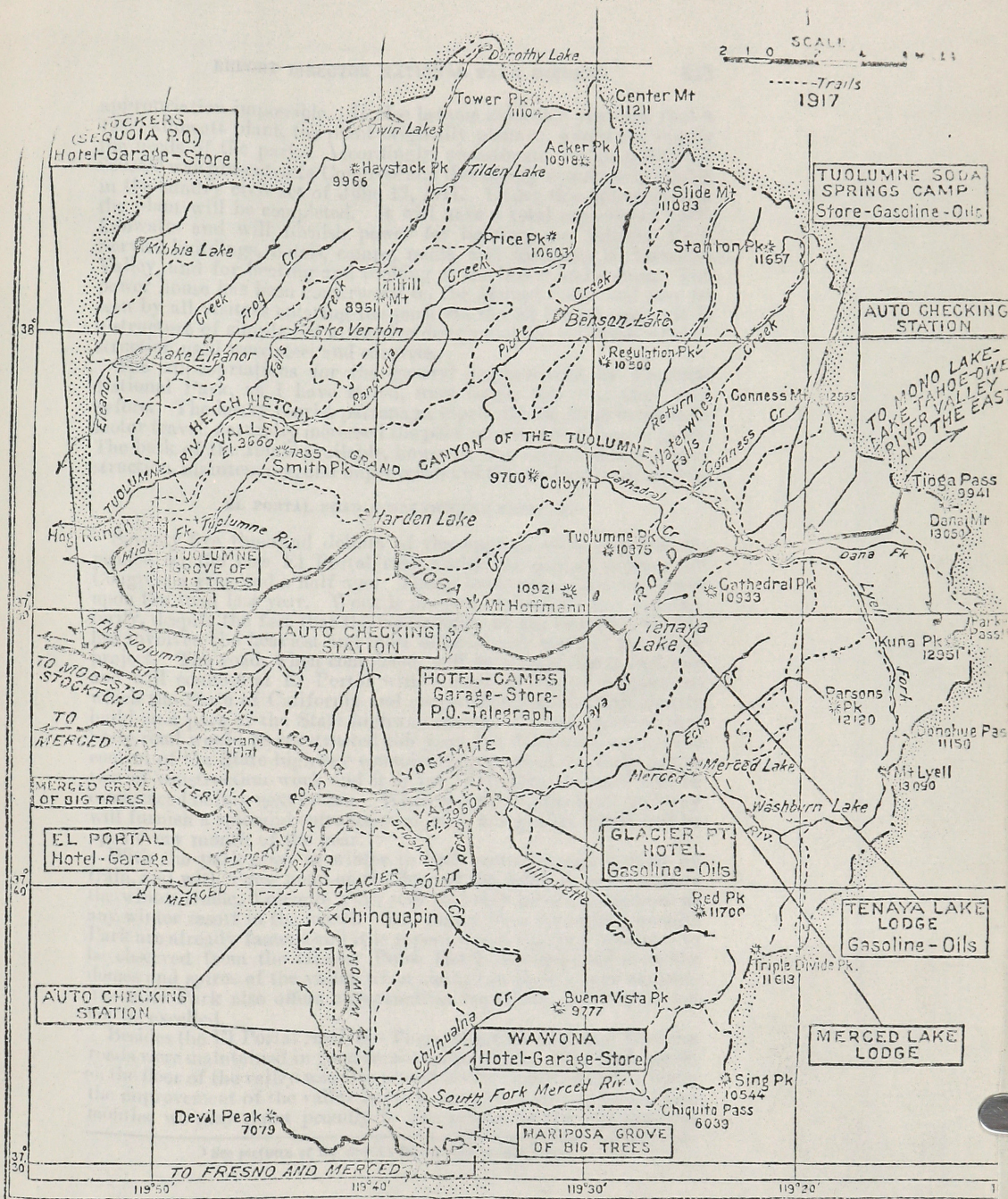
Camp Curry, also in the Yosemite Valley directly under Glacier Point, was improved in many respects during the year, and was operated under the management of Mrs. D. A. Curry. Her husband, David A. Curry, "the stentor of the Yosemite," who founded and operated Camp Curry for many years, died in San Francisco on April 30, 1917.

In discussing hotel and camp accommodations for the Yosemite visitors, it is pertinent to remark that Miami Lodge, on the road between Merced and Wawona, has been greatly improved, and that very attractive additions to the Wawona Hotel have been completed during the past season. Neither of these resorts is within the boundaries of Yosemite Park, but they furnish incentives for delightful stop-overs en route to the park from Fresno, Madera, Merced, and other points, and are also patronized by travelers leaving the park by the southern gateway. Side trips may also be made to these points from the Yosemite Valley or Glacier Point.

#### COMPLETING THE NEW POWER PLANT.

Federal improvement of the park under appropriations by Congress and under the park revenues has gone forward rapidly. The new power plant, the erection of which was begun a year ago, will soon be completed. Originally \$150,000 was appropriated for the installation of this plant, including dams, pipe lines, transmission lines, etc. Unexpected difficulties were encountered in excavating for the dam in the Merced River, which greatly increased the cost of this structure and made the completion of the plant under the original





AUTOMOBILE MAP OF THE YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.



appropriation impossible. It also became evident a year ago that a 1,000-kilowatt plant, the plant originally planned, would not supply the needs of the park. Accordingly, an estimate for an additional \$60,000 was presented to Congress and this money was made available in the sundry civil act of June 12, 1917. Under this appropriation the plant will be completed. It will have a total capacity of 2,000 kilowatts and will furnish power for lighting the National Park Service buildings, hotels, camps, roads, and footpaths in Yosemite Valley, and for heating and cooking at the hotels and camps. The power house has been constructed on the Merced River and may be seen by all visitors entering the park via the El Portal road. It is a structure of simple but attractive design and the materials of construction used were steel and concrete.

The appropriations for the general improvement of Yosemite National Park, as I have stated, were larger this year than ever before. The heavy tourist patronage, especially the large increase in motor travel, naturally increased the park revenues over former years. The bulk of the funds available, however, was expended in the construction, maintenance, and improvement of the road and trail system.

#### EL PORTAL ROAD A MAGNIFICENT HIGHWAY.<sup>1</sup>

Seventy-five thousand dollars of the appropriation is being expended on the new El Portal road under the project adopted by Congress a year and a half ago. Thirty thousand dollars was spent upon the road last year. Work is progressing rapidly and satisfactorily, despite the fact that the construction of the new road to date has involved the heaviest and most difficult rock work of the entire project. The road, when completed, will be a magnificent highway and will connect at El Portal with a road of similar proportions which the State of California and cooperating counties will shortly build as a part of the State highway system. It was expected that State road would be constructed this year, but difficulties beyond the control of the State highway commission prevented the early initiation of construction work and it is not likely that the road will be commenced before next season. When completed, this State highway will furnish a splendid entrance road, with low grades, which will be open every month of the year.

With the park open in winter to both motorists and visitors by train, and with a new hotel on the floor of the valley to accommodate the winter traffic, Yosemite Park will probably become as famous as any winter resort in the world. The winter snow scenes in Yosemite Park are already famous and it is reported that the snow spectacle to be observed from the Glacier Point Hotel far surpasses even the domes and spires of the valley when clothed in their winter mantles. Yosemite Park also offers opportunities for winter sports that can not be excelled.

Besides the El Portal road, the Tioga, Big Oak Flat, and Wawona roads were maintained in good condition for traffic. The road system on the floor of the valley was also placed in excellent condition. When the improvement of the valley roads is completed during the autumn months, we may point proudly to this system as the best that the

<sup>1</sup> See pictures of the new El Portal road in this report.



national parks have to offer to the traveler. The Yosemite Valley has long needed a proper road system, and when one considers the fact that there are weeks during the summer when several hundred cars are being operated in this relatively small area each day, and that there may be during this time four or five thousand visitors in the valley all told, no road system may be considered too highly improved for this public use.

#### WAWONA ROAD ACQUIRED AND TOLLS ELIMINATED.

The old Wawona toll road system connecting Wawona with Fort Monroe, near Inspiration Point on the rim of the Yosemite Valley, with its lateral to Glacier Point from the old stage station at Chinquapin, was turned over to the Federal Government by its owners in the spring of this year. Tolls, of course, were eliminated, and during the season the road system was maintained by the National Park Service. All of the old toll roads except the Coulterville road, which is no longer in general use, have now been acquired by the State or Federal Government. The Yosemite Stage & Turnpike Co., the corporation that built and maintained the Wawona toll road system for many years, still operates an automobile transportation line from Merced, by way of Miami Lodge and Wawona, to Yosemite Valley, in connection with what is called the "Horseshoe route," because passengers are carried in one direction by automobile and in the other by the train service of the Yosemite Valley Railroad.

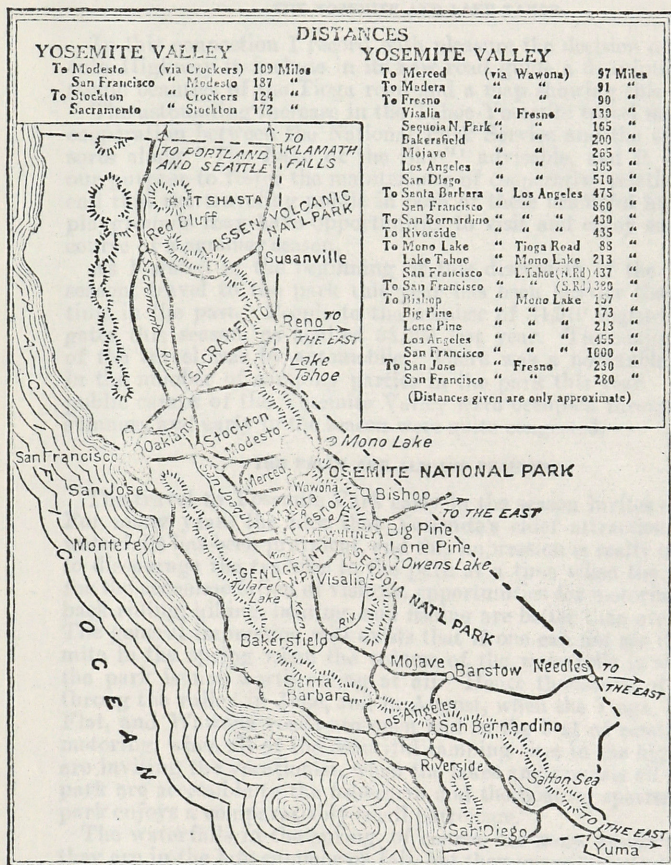
#### REMARKABLE TRAVEL FACTS.

The popularity of the roads of the Yosemite is best proven by reference to the automobile travel for the season. Cars to the number of 6,521 entered the park prior to October 12, as against 4,043 last year. A complete analyzation of this traffic by park entrances *will be found on page 931 in the report of the supervisor of Yosemite Park.* All of the gateways enjoyed a gratifying share of the motor travel. *It should be understood, of course, that nearly every motorist enters the park by one gateway and leaves by another, whenever time and his vacation arrangements will permit.*

In this connection mention should be made of the Tioga road crossing the central part of the park, a scenic highway which runs through Tioga Pass on the crest of the Sierra, where it connects with the Tioga State road in the Leevining Canyon. At Mono Lake the Leevining Creek road joins the State highway system on the eastern side of the mountains, running from the northern part of California through the Lake Tahoe region, thence to Mono Lake and the Owens Valley, and on to southern California. At Lake Tahoe this State road intersects the Lincoln Highway. It appears that both California and eastern motorists traveling over the Lincoln Highway to Lake Tahoe during the past season made the trip to Yosemite by way of Mono Lake and the Tioga road. In fact, one of the most popular automobile roads in California is the Lincoln Highway or its feeders from coast and central California points to Lake Tahoe, thence south on the State highway to the Tioga road, and over this scenic Federal link in the circle trip to the Yosemite, and finally back to the central valleys.



While the popularity of the Tioga road among California motorists has been growing rapidly and it has been used considerably by eastern traffic reaching Lake Tahoe by the Lincoln Highway, it has not received the patronage of the eastern cars that its scenic character invites. Hundreds of motorists have, during the past season, left the Lincoln Highway at Ely, Nev., and have gone over the Midland



AUTOMOBILE ROUTES TO YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK.

Trail into California, and after reaching California have gone south into the southern part of the State instead of turning north at Big Pine on the State highway and crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains by way of the Tioga road and Yosemite Park. Lack of information regarding this route has, of course, caused these motorists to go over the Mojave Desert instead of taking the State highway



north at the village of Big Pine and thus enjoying the beautiful mountain trip through the park. It shall be our purpose to assist in the dissemination of information regarding the Tioga road next season to the end that it may enjoy the eastern travel that it rightly deserves.

#### THE YOSEMITE AND LAKE TAHOE.

In this connection I record with pleasure the decision of the Lincoln Highway to include in its new road guide a description of the scenic beauties of the Tioga road and a map showing this route.

The astounding increase in the Tahoe-Yosemite travel makes close cooperation between the National Park Service and the various resorts along "The Lake of the Sky"<sup>1</sup> advisable, and it should be our purpose to foster the maintenance of cooperative relations to the end that the traveling public in both of these beautiful high Sierra playgrounds may have opportunities to visit and enjoy each in the course of a summer season.

As I stated in the beginning of this discussion of the Yosemite season, travel to the park this year has been heavier than at any time in the past. People to the number of 34,510 registered at its gates this season, as against 33,390 last year. The major portion of the travel was by automobile. There was a noticeable increase in the number of camping parties in the park this year. The free public camps of the Yosemite Valley were occupied throughout the summer, and early in the season were quite congested.

#### THE FALLS ARE ALWAYS BEAUTIFUL.

The travel to Yosemite Park early in the season invites comment. For many years the idea that Yosemite's chief attractions are its waterfalls has been prevalent, and this impression is really operating to discourage the traveler to the park at a time when the facilities for the accommodation of visitors, opportunities for motoring, horse-back riding, hiking, boating, and fishing are better than ever before. The general impression still exists that if one can not see the Yosemite in the spring when the volume of the waterfalls is abnormal, the park is not worth seeing at all. Hence thousands of visitors throng the valley in June, and in August, when the Tioga, Big Oak Flat, and Wawona roads are open and in the best of condition for motoring, when all of the beautiful camping sites in the high Sierra are inviting the vacationist, when the lakes and streams all over the park are accessible to the fisherman and the boating sportsman, the park enjoys a comparatively small patronage.

The waterfalls in the spring, of course, are more wonderful than they are in the late summer or fall, but they are extremely beautiful then, too. Besides, they are only one of scores of Yosemite attractions, and the visitor to this great park should either plan to come early and stay late, or time his trip to make possible the full enjoyment of all that the park has to offer, not only in the incomparable valley, but throughout its great mountainous area of 719,622 acres.

The sport of boating on the Merced River was developed this summer for the first time and it promises to become one of the

<sup>1</sup>George Wharton James has written a book on Lake Tahoe entitled "The Lake of the Sky."



leading amusements of the valley in the near future. The vistas of the carved walls and wonderful glaciated features of the Yosemite Gorge from a motor boat on the Merced are worth going a long distance to see.

#### THE FAMOUS FIREFALL REESTABLISHED.

The famous firefall from Glacier Point was authorized again this season and nightly delighted hundreds of visitors who gathered to see it.

#### THE SIERRA CLUB IN THE PARK.

The Sierra Club held its 1917 outing in the Yosemite Park and headquarters were established at Tuolumne Soda Springs, where the club recently erected the Parsons Memorial Lodge, a picturesque structure which is used as a gathering place for club members and their friends. From the Tuolumne Soda Springs members of the club explored all of the surrounding mountain regions, engaged in the sport of climbing the highest peaks of the park, and enjoyed together the camp-fire sports and songs that make Sierra Club life in its mountain camps so delightful. The club will also spend next summer in the park. A permanent camp will again be established at Tuolumne Soda Springs and expeditions will be made from this base to Mount Ritter, Thousand Island Lakes, the Devil Postpile Monument, etc. It will also explore the Ten Lake Basin, a beautiful region that is rarely seen by the park visitor.

The National Park Service welcomes the use of the national parks by the big mountaineering organizations of the country. The Prairie Club of Chicago has visited Mesa Verde, Yellowstone, and Glacier National Parks during the past three summers. This season it was in Glacier Park for three weeks. The Mountaineers of the Northwest have visited Mount Rainier annually for many years. The Colorado Mountain Club spent several summers in the Rocky Mountain Park region, and the Sierra Club makes a practice of going each year into either the Yosemite Park or the beautiful regions of the Kings and Kern River Canyons, which it is now proposed to add to the Sequoia National Park. Another western mountain club that has visited the parks on its outings is the Mazama Club, with headquarters in Portland, Oreg.

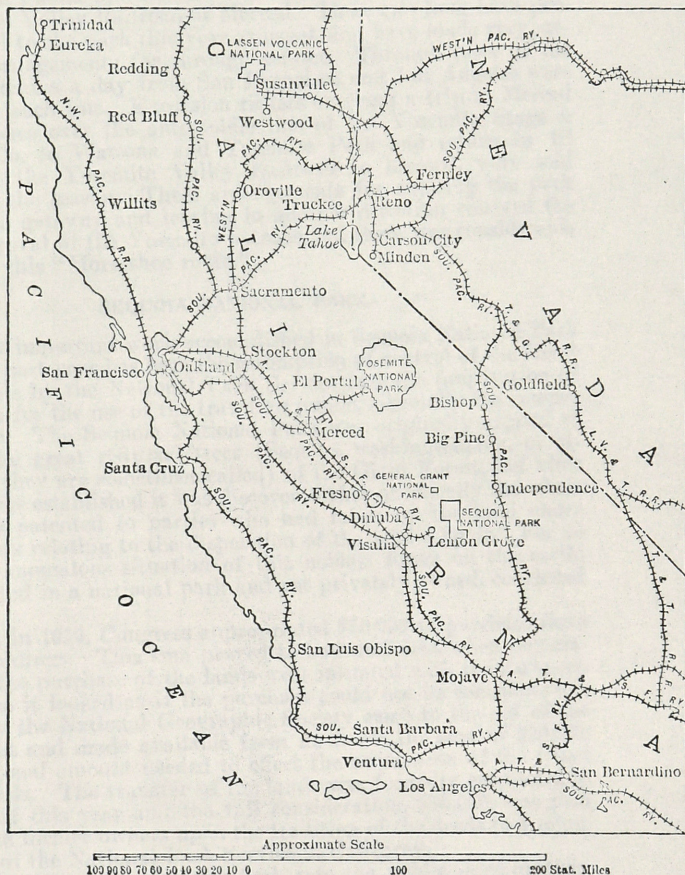
#### CENTER OF THE JOHN MUIR TRAIL.

The relation of the John Muir trail to the parks of California is an intimate one and deserves attention here because the Yosemite Park is about to become the center of this important high mountain trail system. It was projected several years ago by the Sierra Club, and an appropriation was made by the State of California for its construction south from the Yosemite Park through the Kings River country to the summit of Mount Whitney. This trail traverses the finest scenic regions of the Sierra Nevada Range, and should the Sequoia Park be enlarged as proposed it will form an important means of travel and communication between the two parks. It is now proposed to extend the John Muir trail north to Lake Tahoe, through another region of scenic grandeur. When this extension is



completed, the Yosemite Park will become the center of the John Muir trail, and in any event it should become the mecca for hikers from all over the country, as well as those who enjoy traveling in the mountains with a pack train.

The wild animals of Yosemite National Park are increasing, but here again we have a situation that demands State cooperation. The



RAILROADS TRIBUTARY TO NATIONAL PARKS IN CALIFORNIA.

deer of the park are driven down into the lower altitudes by the snow and eventually wander outside of the park boundaries, where they are killed by the hundreds. A game refuge just outside of the park should be established at the next session of the State legislature, in order that these animals may receive proper protection. As I



have pointed out in discussing Mount Rainier problems, hunting in a few years just beyond such a refuge would be better by far than it is now. Near several of the national parks State game refuges, such as those established by Wyoming and Montana outside of Yellowstone National Park, should be created by the State in order to give the park animals a larger measure of protection.

The principal railroads approaching Yosemite National Park are the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe lines, both of which connect with the Yosemite Valley Railroad at Merced. These two lines have promoted travel to the park this year as usual, and have made very satisfactory arrangements for through service. Through most of the season two trains a day from San Francisco and Los Angeles were operated by each line. Excursion tickets covering a trip to Merced by rail, thence over the automobile line of the Yosemite Stage & Turnpike Co. to Wawona and Yosemite Park and return by El Portal and the Yosemite Valley Railroad to Merced, were sold throughout the season. These arrangements for entering the park through one gateway and leaving in another direction received the hearty approval of the Yosemite patrons and there was considerable travel over this "Horseshoe route."

#### SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK.

The most important work accomplished in Sequoia National Park during the past year has been the assumption of control of the Giant Forest lands by the National Park Service and the preparation of these lands for the use of the traveling public, especially the camper and angler. The Sequoia National Park was originally created to preserve the great redwood trees (*Sequoia washingtoniana*, or *gigantea*, as they are sometimes called) of the Giant Forest, but after the park was established it was discovered that practically the whole forest was patented to parties who had taken up the land under various laws relating to the disposition of the public lands. For 26 years the anomalous situation of this noblest forest on the earth, being located in a national park and yet privately owned, continued to exist.

Finally, in 1916, Congress appropriated \$50,000 to purchase these private holdings. This sum proved to be insufficient when negotiations for the purchase of the lands were initiated with their owners. For a time it looked as if the purchase could not be consummated, but finally the National Geographic Society came to the aid of the department and made available from its funds the sum of \$20,000, the additional amount needed to effect the acquisition of the Giant Forest lands. The transfer of the lands was formally completed in January of this year and the full consideration, \$70,000, was paid over to the former owners upon the tradition of the deeds to a representative of the National Park Service in California.

Thus the Giant Forest came back into the public domain, there to remain to the end of time for the pleasure and edification of all future generations. It is reasonable to assume that the trees of the forest will stand until the end of time, because many of them are already 4,000 years of age and still as vigorous as the saplings of a few decades' growth.