

# U. S. TRAVEL PROGRAM

## Revived Federal Agency Will Promote Tourism as a Year-Round Industry

By JAY WALZ

WASHINGTON—The United States Travel Bureau, which became a war casualty shortly after its birth in 1940, has been revived to help more tourists see more of America all the year around.

James L. Bossemeyer, a National Parks Service veteran who was brought from San Francisco last September to reopen the office, is still busy organizing his staff and a twelve-member advisory committee to help develop a broad program.

The new director is already certain of one promotion that his agency, to be known now as the U. S. Travel Division of the National Parks Service, intends to push hard. That is the idea of presenting America as a land of "four-season vacations."

The movement to extend touring and vacationing beyond a two or three month summer period is already under way in some sections of the country. Many spots in New England, for example, attract sightseers in the summer and skiers in winter. Some other regions are "just beginning to get the idea."

Mr. Bossemeyer sees great promise for the travel industry, already one of the largest in the country. In the second post-war year it did a record \$10 billion business, according to estimates. This was about \$3 billion more than was spent on domestic travel in 1940 and 1941, the best years to that time.

"Our efforts will be directed to pointing out to people the wealth of places worth visiting in this big country, regardless of the time of year, and to encouraging development of the proper facilities for accommodating them," said Mr. Bossemeyer, himself an inveterate traveler.

### Promoting Travel

The division will operate purely as a promotion agency. Under its authority from Congress, it has no regulatory powers. It cannot, for example, license hotels and travel agencies as Mexico's Department of Tourism is empowered to do.

Neither will it have as much money to spend as some foreign Governments have provided for their travel bureaus. The bill passed by Congress just before it adjourned last summer authorized expenditures of not more than \$100,000 a year. The actual appropriation to run the division through next June, however, was \$75,000.

Mr. Bossemeyer believes there is much that his office can do on a strictly "cooperative" basis. He has several proposals to take up with his advisors when they meet with him for the first time in January. Russell E. Singer, executive vice president of the American Automobile Association, will serve as chairman of the advisory committee to be made up of six representatives of Government agencies and six representatives of transportation and accommodations organizations outside the Government.

There will also be three "collaborators" serving as consultants, from the National Association of Travel Officials, made up largely of officials of state travel bureaus.

The immediate function of the Federal travel agency, Mr. Bosse-

meyer says, will be to maintain a close liaison with the state groups "with particular emphasis on cooperative efforts designed to spread travel throughout the year."

If, for example, the state of Maine has worked out an original idea for attracting tourists, the United States Travel Division will stand ready to pass it along to Montana, or vice versa. This will involve sending out bulletins and setting up a library of information data that will be open not only to state bureaus but also to private agencies.

Mr. Bossemeyer said he hoped to work just as closely with private travel groups representing railroads, air lines, bus lines, hotels and other enterprises, most of whom will have spokesmen on the advisory committee.

### Travel Statistics

One of the most urgent needs, judging from requests coming to the division, is adequate travel statistics. For lack of them it is impossible, Mr. Bossemeyer says, to determine just how important travel is to the social and economic welfare of the country. A compilation of facts and figures on the value, volume and trends in travel is a "must" function, he believes, and he is sure his advisory committee will back him up.

One of the purposes of the first travel bureau, set up in 1940, was to counterbalance the trend toward foreign travel by Americans by encouraging visitors from other countries to our shores. This is still one of the objectives as set forth in the law; but it has no practical application at present.

American dollars are too scarce in most foreign countries to be spent by their citizens in travel here, and Mr. Bossemeyer said they will not be encouraged to do so until the State Department says such activity would be in accordance with our foreign policy.

One thing he wants made clear.

"We are not set up to promote travel to the national parks," Mr. Bossemeyer stated emphatically. "We were put in the National Parks Service to avoid establishing an independent agency, so I suppose there will be criticism that we are partial to the parks. But we're not. We are impartial. Our job is to get people to travel—anywhere they please."