REPORT

OF THE

ACTING SUPERINTENDENT

OF THE

SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARKS,

IN THE

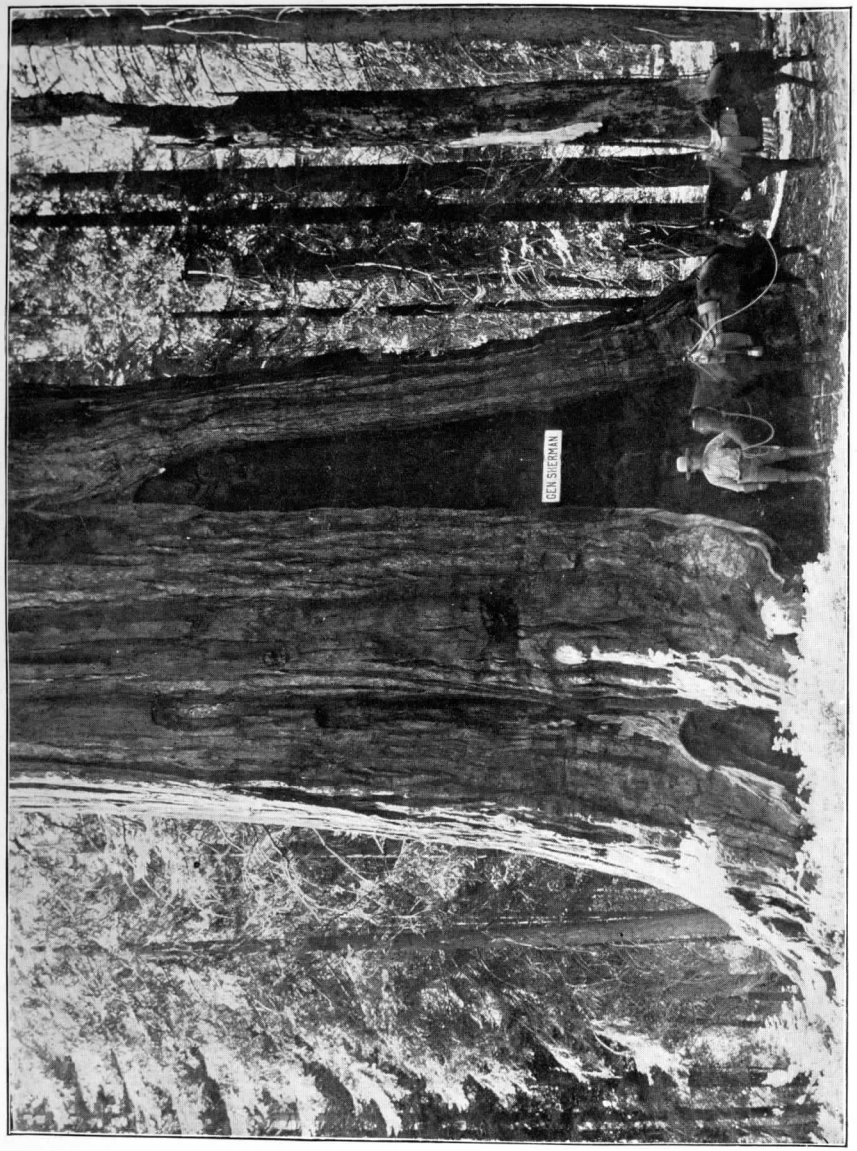
STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

TO THE

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

1900.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1900.



GENERAL SHERMAN TREE.

REPORT

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BURNED HOLLOW SEQUOIA, 11 BY 22 FEET—HOLLOW.

REPORT

OF THE

ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF THE SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARKS, CALIFORNIA.

OFFICE OF THE ACTING SUPERINTENDENT,
SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARKS,
Three Rivers, Cal., September 15, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of the condition of affairs and of the management of the Sequoia and General Grant national parks since the fiscal year ending June 30, 1899.

Pursuant to Special Orders, No. 99, Headquarters Department California, May 9, 1900, I marched with Troop G, Sixth Cavalry (61 enlisted men), from the Presidio of San Francisco, Cal., to Three Rivers, Cal., arriving there June 6, 1900. The troop was to form a guard for the above parks.

Upon arriving at Three Rivers I received a letter from the honorable Secretary of the Interior, designating myself as acting superintendent of the above-mentioned parks, and giving me instructions as to the management of them.

Soon after arriving at Three Rivers I received orders from Headquarters Department of California to keep my command together until further orders, on account of portions of the Sixth Cavalry having been ordered to the Philippines.

The troop was kept at Three Rivers until July 4, when I received information from the department commander that it was no longer necessary to keep the command together.

Detachments were sent to camp at the main entrances to the park at Watson's Spring, on the Old Colony Mill road; at Oak Grove, on the Mineral King road, and at Redwood Cabin, on the South Fork of the Kaweah River, where the South Fork trail crosses the western park boundary, and also in General Grant Park.

On the 9th of July troop headquarters were moved to Weisher's Mill, on the Mineral King road, and other camps were established at Hockett's Meadow, and later at Cabin Meadows, on the north park line. The whole park boundary was thus protected by guards.

Owing to the difficulty of communicating between the camp at Weisher's Mill and the other camps, the troop headquarters were moved back to Three Rivers on the 25th of August.

Weisher's Mill not being considered a suitable camp, owing to the work on the road to the Giant Forest, as soon as the road is opened to the Giant Forest I respectfully recommend that the headquarters of the troops protecting the park be required to camp at the Giant

Forest, as that forest is the principal and most valuable portion of the park, has never been properly protected, and in case of forest fires great and incalculable damage could be done before troops could reach the scene and control the fire.

From July 1, 1899, until November 15, 1899, the parks were guarded by a detachment of the Third U. S. Artillery, commanded by Second Lieut. Henry B. Clarke, Third Artillery.

From November 15 to January 20 there was no guard for the parks. At the latter date and until the arrival of Troop G, Sixth Cavalry, and in fact until July 7, 1900, the parks were protected by Forest Ranger Ernest Britten, and at my request he has been kept on duty in the parks until the present time, and has rendered efficient and very valuable service.

THE ROAD TO THE GIANT FOREST.

The Sequoia National Park was established by act of Congress approved September 25, 1890, and during the past ten years of its existence the park has been such in name only, as up to the present year not one dollar has been expended to improve it and make its natural beauties and sublime scenery accessible to the people.

The first appropriation for the improvement of the park was made in the sundry civil bill approved June 6, 1900, in which an appropriation of $10,000 was authorized "for protection of the park and the construction and repair of bridges, fences, and trails, and improvement and extension of roads."

The most important improvement needed was the repair of the Old Colony Mill road and its extension to the Giant Forest. For this purpose the amount of $800 was assigned by the honorable Secretary of the Interior to the repair of the Old Colony Mill road, and the balance of the appropriation, $9,200, set aside for the extension of said road toward the Giant Forest.

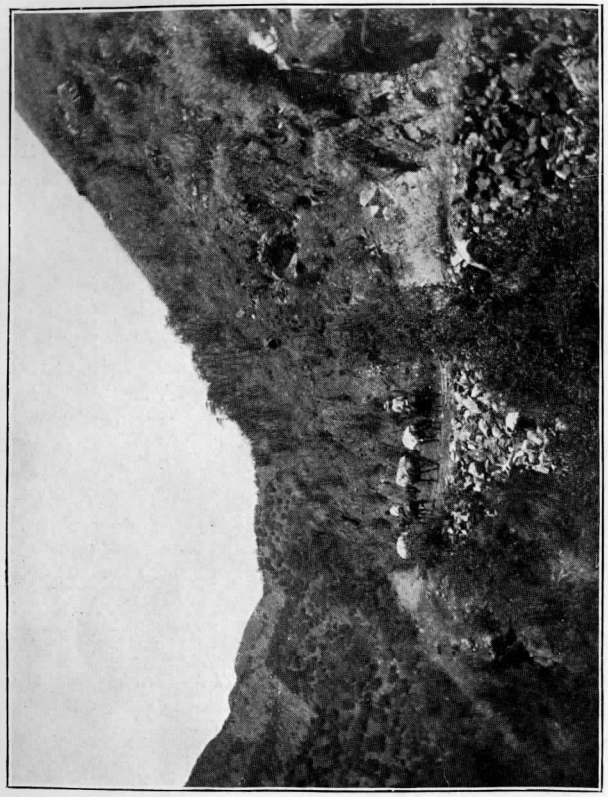
The work of repair began July 16, 1900, at Watson's Spring and was finished to the Old Colony Mill on August 15, 1900, a distance of 9 miles.

The road had not been used for ten years, and it had become almost impassable on account of a dense growth of brushwood, large bowlders having fallen into it, and the retaining walls fallen away.

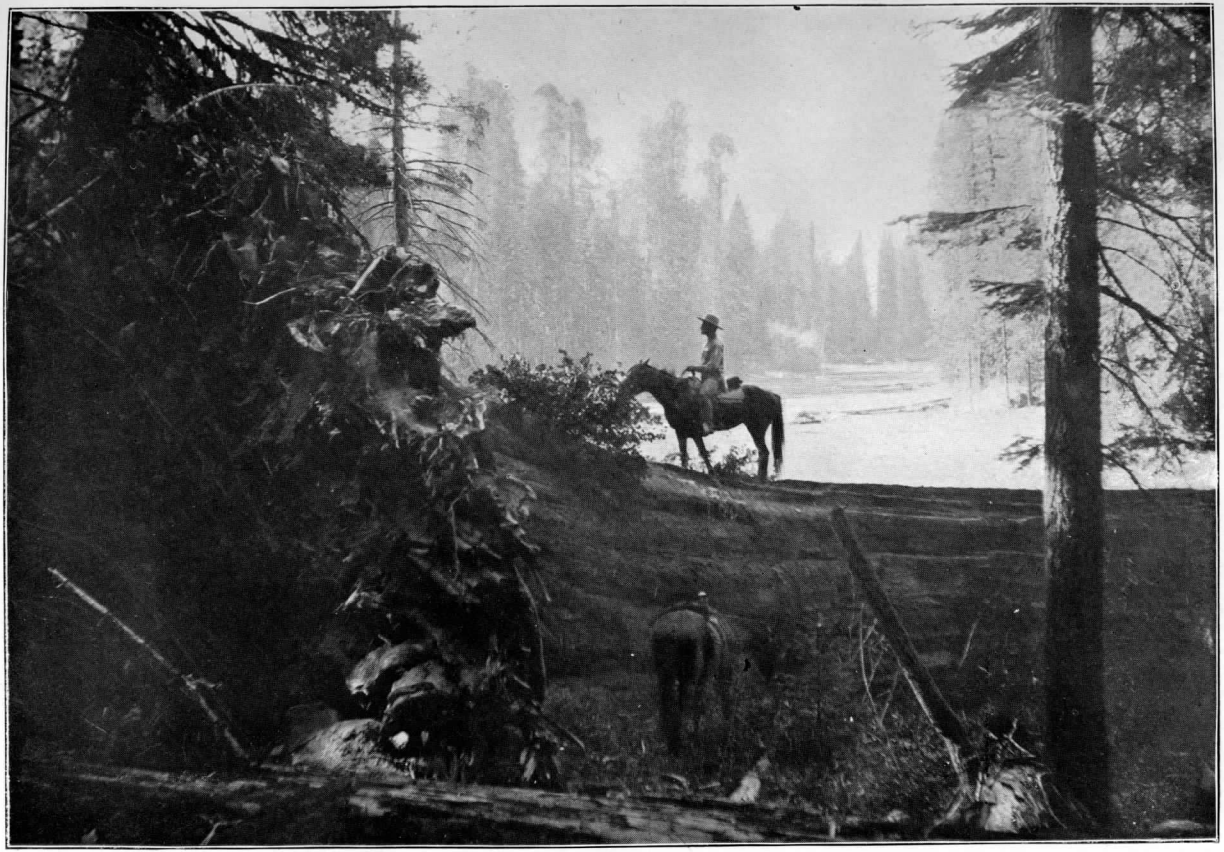
This is a remarkable road, from the vast amount of labor used in its construction, arising from the mountainous and rugged country through which it passes. Over three years were spent in its construction, having been built by the Kaweah Colony for the purpose of getting at the big trees of the Giant Forest, which it was proposed to cut into lumber; but the Government put a stop to its proceedings and the investment was a total loss to the colony.

As the Old Colony Mill road is very narrow, permitting teams to pass only at rare intervals, it is in great need of further improvement, to cut off the sharp bends on the upper side of the road, widen the turnouts, and make repairs that will be needed after the winter storms have washed its bed. For this purpose the sum of $1,000 is recommended to be appropriated by the Congress at its next session.

As to the extension of the road from the Colony mill to the Giant Forest (8½ miles distant), the work began on August 15, 1900. The country through which the road passes is very rough and mountainous,



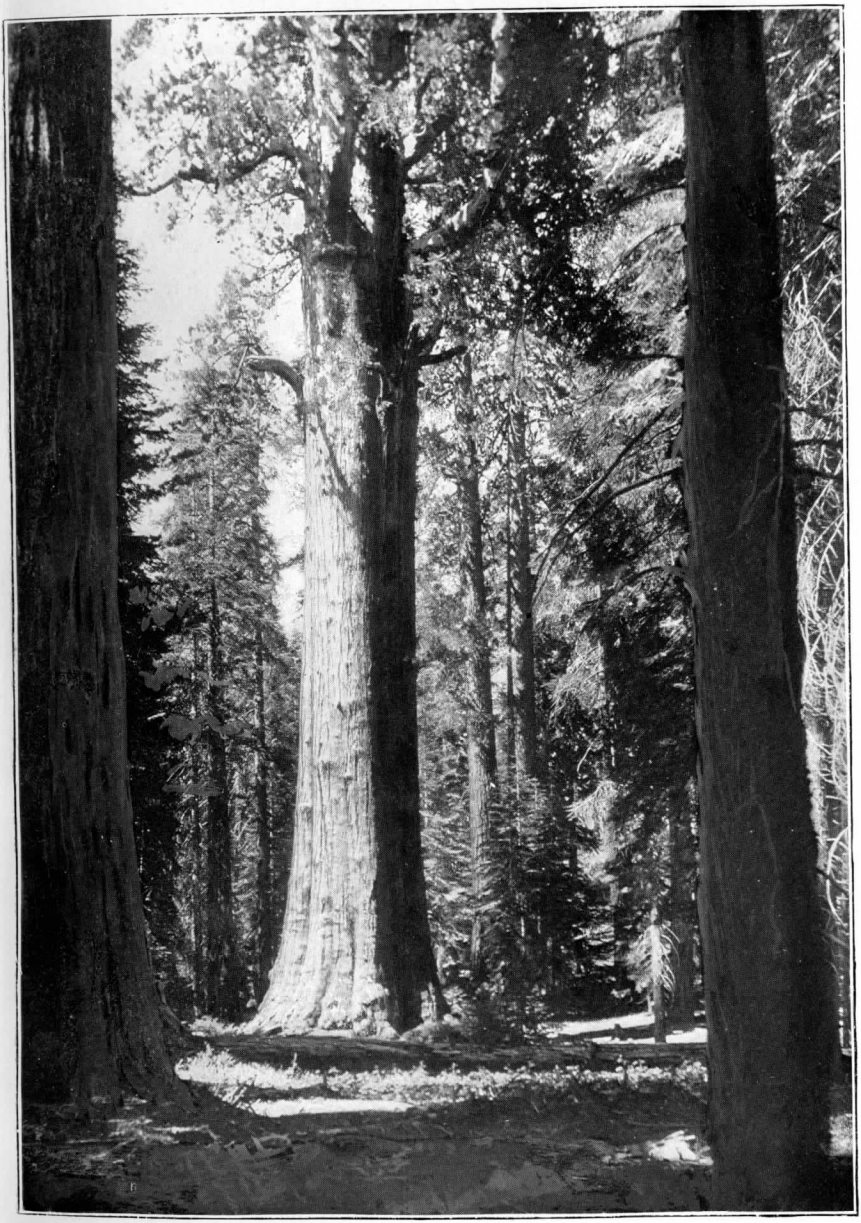
VIEW OF PART OF "OLD COLONY MILL" ROAD.



FALLEN SEQUOIA—LONG MEADOW, GIANT FOREST.



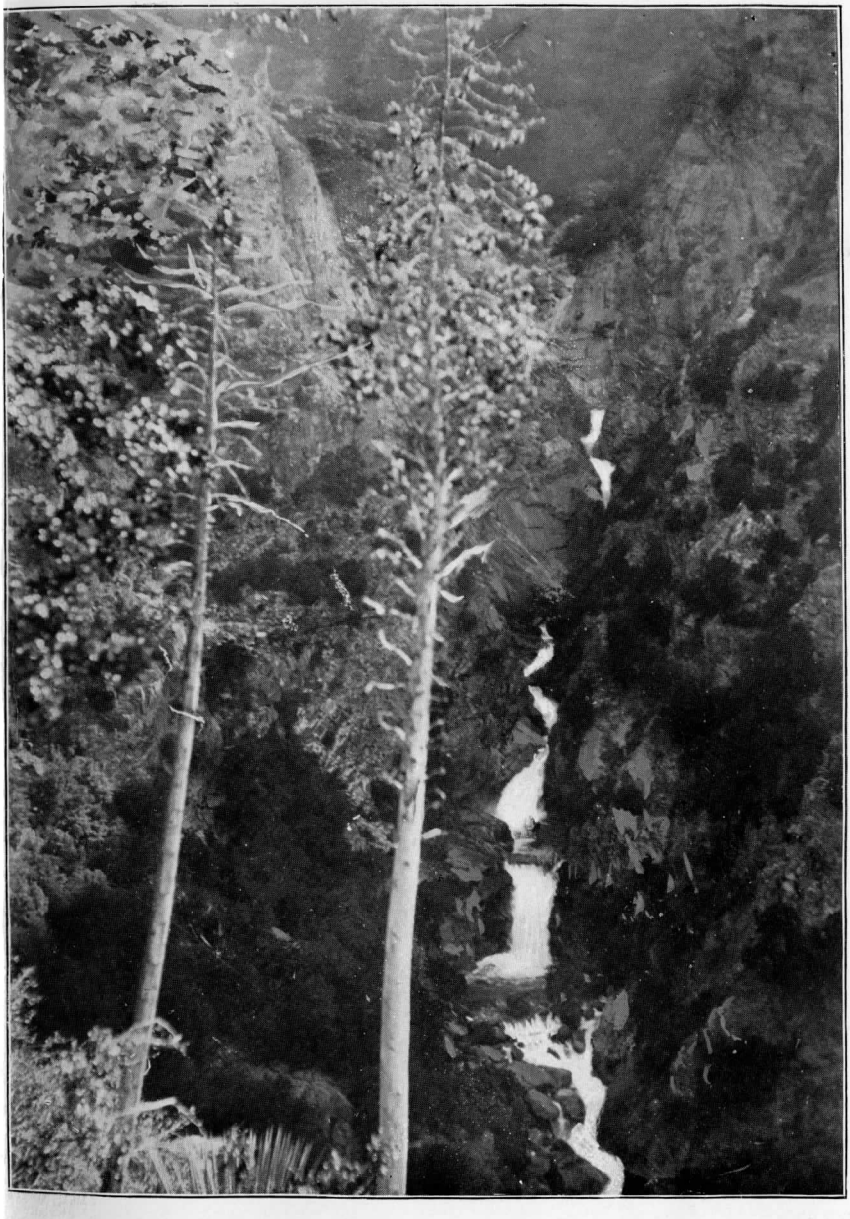
FALLEN SEQUOIA—LONG MEADOW GIANT FOREST.



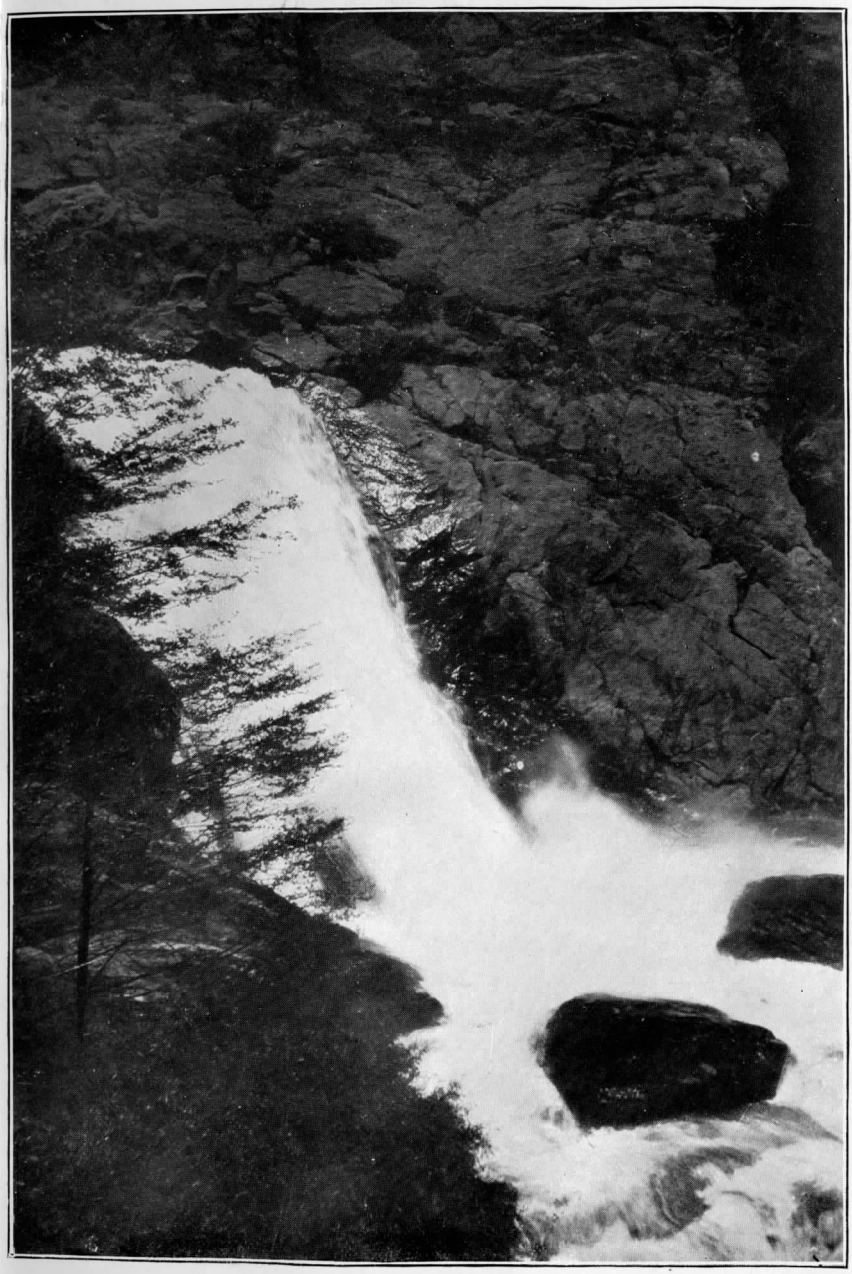
VIEW IN THE GIANT FOREST.



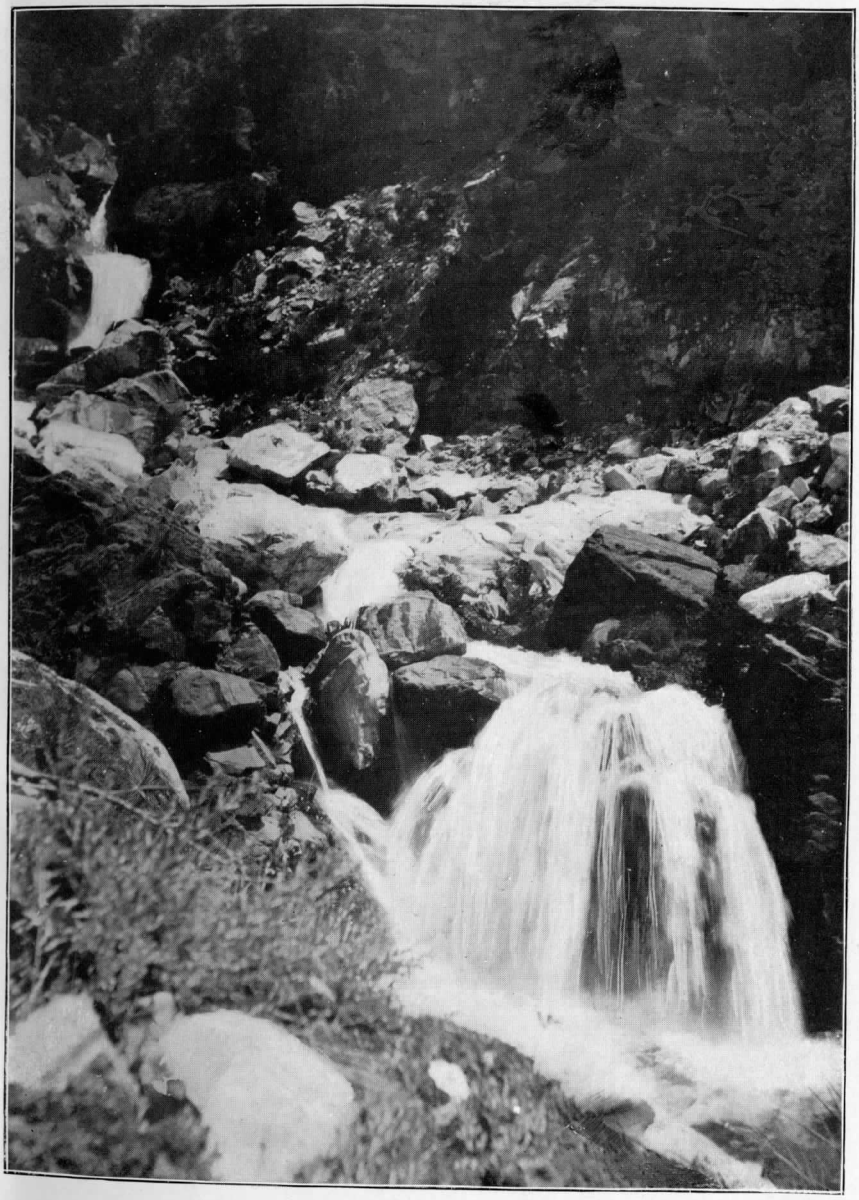
TWIN GIANTS.



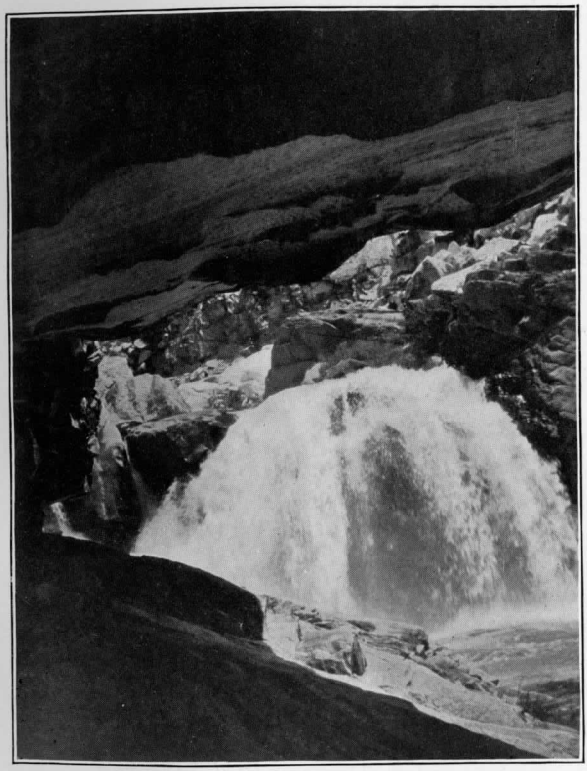
MARBLE FALLS, MARBLE FORK, KAWEAH RIVER, 1,500 FEET HIGH.



PART OF MARBLE FALLS.



PART OF MARBLE FALLS.



PART OF MARBLE FALLS.



PART OF THE MARBLE FALLS OF THE MARBLE FORK OF THE KAWEAH RIVER UNDER THE GIANT FOREST. THE FALLS ALTOGETHER ARE 1,500 FEET HIGH.

heavily timbered, and it has required careful and skillful examination of the country to find a route that was practicable. The route has finally been located and low grades for a mountain road attained, in no case exceeding 8 feet rise in 100 feet.

The appropriation set aside ($9,200) will not be sufficient to carry the road as far as the Giant Forest. The route through which the road passes is very heavily timbered, long ledges of rock have to be gone through, and the soil is filled with bowlders and "hardpan" clay and is very difficult to work. It is estimated that $10,000 will be needed to complete the road and bridge the creeks and the Marble Fork of the Kaweah River and put in culverts, the appropriation to be made immediately available, so that the work will not have to stop longer than necessary, and the road be opened before the commencement of the next season, July 1, 1901.

As the foregoing proposed extension will only take the road to the northwestern corner of the Giant Forest at the Round Meadow, it will be desirable to continue the road to the points of interest in and around the forest.

The road should be continued in a circular direction from the Round Meadows to near Moro Rock, Tharp's Log Cabin, the General Sherman Tree, Circular Meadow, and back to the Round Meadows. The construction will not be expensive and $500 a mile is deemed sufficient.

IMPORTANT TRAILS NEEDED.

The trails of the park and vicinity leading to the various points of interest are in a wretched condition, are made independent of grade, and are filled with rocks and fallen logs.

There is no easy route from the Giant Forest south, and in order to have some easy mode of communication between the Giant Forest and the Mineral King road, and beyond to the Kern River country, it is respectfully recommended that at least $1,500 be appropriated for building a trail from the Giant Forest near Moro Rock, south of Panther Peak and south of Sugar Bowl Dome, crossing Buck Canyon near its mouth, thence via Harmon Meadows and Bear Gap, back of Atwell's mill to the Mineral King road near Weisher's mill, a distance of about 20 miles; the road to be as light and even a grade as practicable. Another trail is recommended to be built from near where the new wagon road crosses the Marble Fork, via Halstead Meadows and Horse Corral Meadows to Kings River Canyon, 25 miles, for which an appropriation of $1,000 is respectfully recommended.

The main line of travel followed by tourists and visitors is to the Kings River Canyon, thence via Halstead Meadows through the Giant Forest to Kern River Canyon and Mount Whitney. The object of the above trails is to facilitate said travel and avoid the difficult and dangerous trails now followed. For this latter trail to Kings River Canyon it is respectfully recommended that the sum of $1,000 be appropriated.

There is also necessity for a practical trail to the Alta Meadows, situated to the east of the Giant Forest, about 7 miles over the Alta Peak.

The scenery from Panoramic Point in the Alta Meadows is of the grandest nature and it should be rendered accessible.

For this purpose the sum of $500 is respectfully recommended to be appropriated.

PATENTED LANDS.

There is considerable private land owned within the boundaries of the park—said to be 5,440 acres.

The Atwell mill estate is located for a mile within the beautiful sequoia forest along the Mineral King road within the park, and the traveler along that road, after admiring the beauties of the forest, suddenly comes out on blackened ruins of stumps and trunks of sequoia trees that have been felled for lumber and by carelessness burnt.

Apparently not over 10 per cent of the timber has been used. Whole trees have been felled so carelessly as to break up and be worthless for lumber, and of the finest sequoias only the clear lumber is taken, leaving the enormous tops to be a menace by fire to the whole forest.

Near Atwell's mill is a shingle mill within the park, on private lands, on which land the forest is being denuded in the same manner.

I respectfully recommend that a commission of three members be appointed by the honorable Secretary of the Interior, to appraise all the private lands within the boundaries of the General Grant and Sequoia parks with a view to their purchase by the Government, and that the sum of $500 be appropriated to pay the expenses of the commission.

TRESPASSING AND POACHING.

There have been no sheep in the park this season, and only a smal band of horses and cattle, which were promptly ejected.

As the troops are only on duty in the parks for a portion of the year, as soon as they leave the citizens who live near the parks are said to slaughter the game in the most dastardly way, killing does as well as bucks. To prevent this destruction it is respectfully recommended that two forest rangers be employed in the Sequoia Park during all the time the troops are away, one to have charge north of the Middle Fork and one south of that river.

I am told that it has also been customary for the soldiers on duty in the park to kill deer and other game while on duty here. As far as my troops are concerned, I have strictly forbidden any shooting whatever in the park by them, and I believe my orders have been carried out.

If soldiers are allowed to shoot and trap game—the citizens have done so, and will continue to give themselves the same privilege, and I respectfully recommend that the honorable Secretary of the Interior give instructions to future commanding officers upon this subject.

I am told by reliable citizens that there is less game in the park now than there was when the troops first came here ten years ago, and there certainly is very little game here to what there should be, had the game been properly protected.

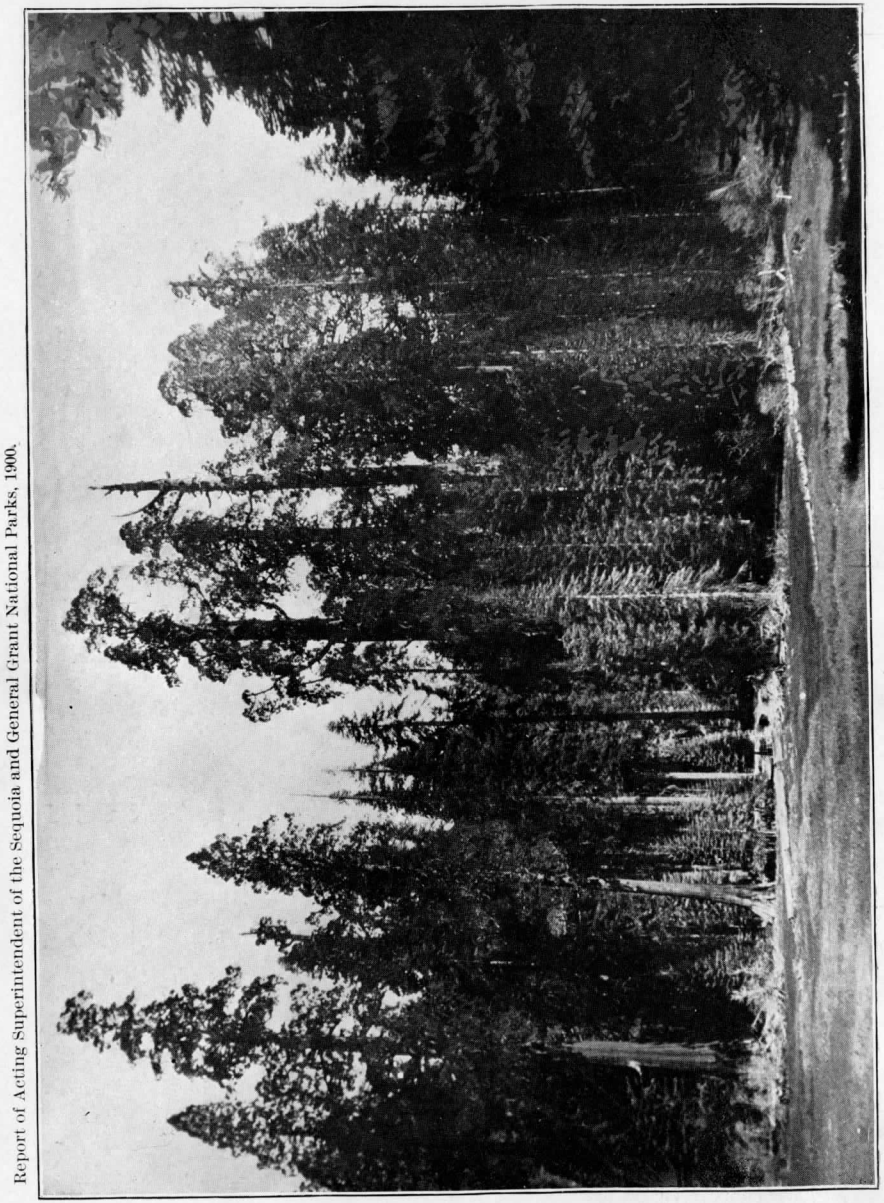
The park should be used as a breeding ground. What game goes outside of the limits should be killed with a decent regard for the State laws in the matter, only bucks being killed, and in the proper season.

PARK BOUNDARIES.

The boundaries of both parks have now been regularly surveyed and marked, the trees blazed, and crossings of roads and trails marked,



MEADOW—GIANT FOREST.



MEADOW—GIANT FOREST.

so that there can be no further reasonable excuse on the part of trespassers that they did not know where the lines were.

MAPS.

As the maps extant of this section of country are extremely inaccurate and misleading, it is respectfully recommended that an accurate topographical survey of the parks be made by the United States Geological Survey.

EXTENSION OF THE PARK BOUNDARIES.

The present limits of the Sequoia Park are altogether too small, and should be extended to the eastward as far as Mount Whitney, so as to take in the magnificent Kern River Canyon, and north to take in King's River Canyon, both of which canyons are visited by nearly all that come to see the Giant Forest.

The magnificent mountain scenery to the east of the Giant Forest, and which is said to excel anything in Switzerland, is outside the park and of no use to anyone, being made up of bare granite peaks mostly.

GAME AND FISH.

The principal large game are deer, bear, and panther, or California lion. The small animals are the fisher coyote, black wolf, gray squirrel, ground squirrel, and chipmunk; birds, grouse, and mountain quail in abundance.

The principal fish are the rainbow trout in nearly all the large streams. The finest fishing is in the Little and Big Kern rivers, where the rainbow trout are found, and the golden trout near Mount Whitney, said to be the only trout of that kind in the world.

FOREST FIRES.

There have been only two fires in or near the park this season, one in the Forest Reserve, the other on the east park line. They were promptly extinguished.

PERMANENT CAMPS.

Owing to the rugged nature of the country, and difficulty of moving from north to south on account of deep canyons, camps have to be located at different localities instead of using patrols.

The permanent headquarters camp should be located in the Giant Forest.

The supply camp should be at Kaweah post-office, about 2 miles north of the Kaweah River bridge, at Three Rivers, and small camps at Weishers Mill, Hocketts Meadows, Redwood Cabin on the South Fork, and Cabin Meadows on the north boundary.

Buildings for shelter should be put up at the Giant Forest and at Kaweah post-office.

CONSTRUCTION OF TRAILS.

The troops this year have constructed 3 miles of new trail between camps at Weishers Mill and Hocketts Meadows, thus avoiding the

terrible steep climb of the Wilhelm Cut-off; also a mile of trail connecting the Colony Mill with Administration Point, overlooking the grand Marble Falls of the Marble Fork of the Kaweah River; also 2 miles of trail, shortening the distance about 3 miles between Colony Mill and Cabin Meadows on the trail to the General Grant Park, and this whole distance by trail has been shortened about 5 miles.

The detachment in the General Grant Park under charge of Corpl. Frank Delano, Troop G, Sixth Cavalry, has rendered valuable service in clearing out the roads of fallen timber, repairing the road to that park, and cleaning up the park of refuse of former camps.

ROUTE OF TRAVEL TO GIANT FOREST.

As the best route for reaching the Giant Forest is not generally known, I desire to state for the benefit of the public that the city of Visalia, Tulare County, Cal., is the proper place to leave the railroad. From there a good road leads through a park-like country of beautiful oak groves for several miles, then through the fine citrus orchards at Lemon Cove, thence up the main Kaweah River to Three Rivers post-office, a distance of 25 miles from Visalia. At Three Rivers the main Kaweah River is crossed and the road proceeds up the North Fork of the Kaweah River a few miles, thence takes the Old Colony Mill road which winds in and around the Ash Mountains with gentle curves and easy grades, as far as the Old Colony Mill site—21 miles from Three Rivers—5,400 feet in altitude, and where a magnificant view is obtained of the San Joaquin Valley, and the Coast Range Mountains, and the Giant Forest to the eastward, and range after range of mountains to the south.

The extension of the road to the Giant Forest, 8½ miles distant, passes through a beautifully and thickly timbered country, affording beautiful views of the magnificent scenery of the Marble Fork of the Kaweah River, 5 miles beyond the Old Colony Mill.

A fine bridge 50 feet high will span the beautiful stream, supported on solid granite abutments. The river, running through a box canyon below the bridge, thence the road ascends the western slope of the mesa by easy grades up the 1,300 feet to the Giant Forest, a distance of 3 miles.

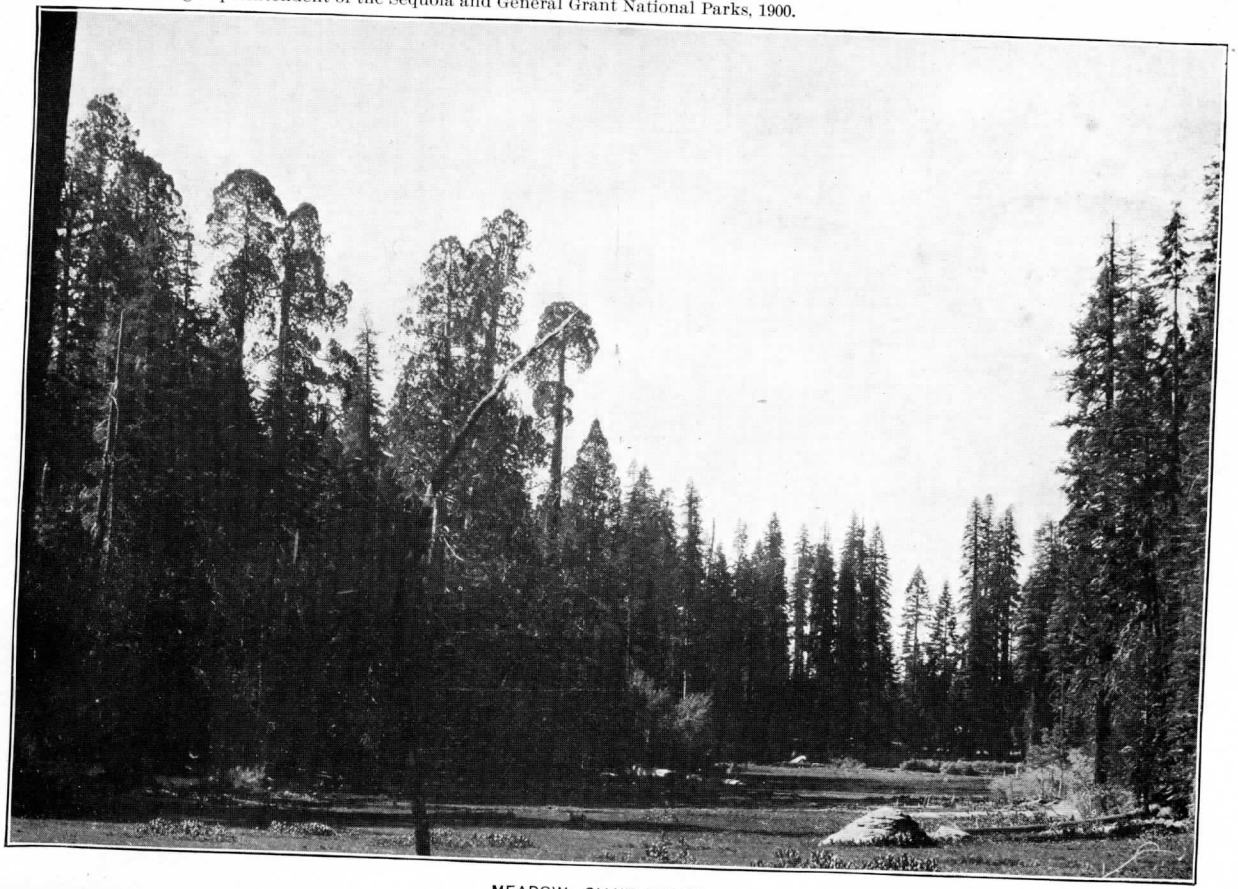
During this season Messrs. Broder and Hopping have run a tri-weekly stage line from Visalia to Kaweah post-office, 2 miles beyond Three Rivers, and from there pack mules have been used to carry tourists through the park.

It is presumed that as soon as the road is completed to the Giant Forest that a stage line will be put on the whole distance and a hotel erected in the Giant Forest.

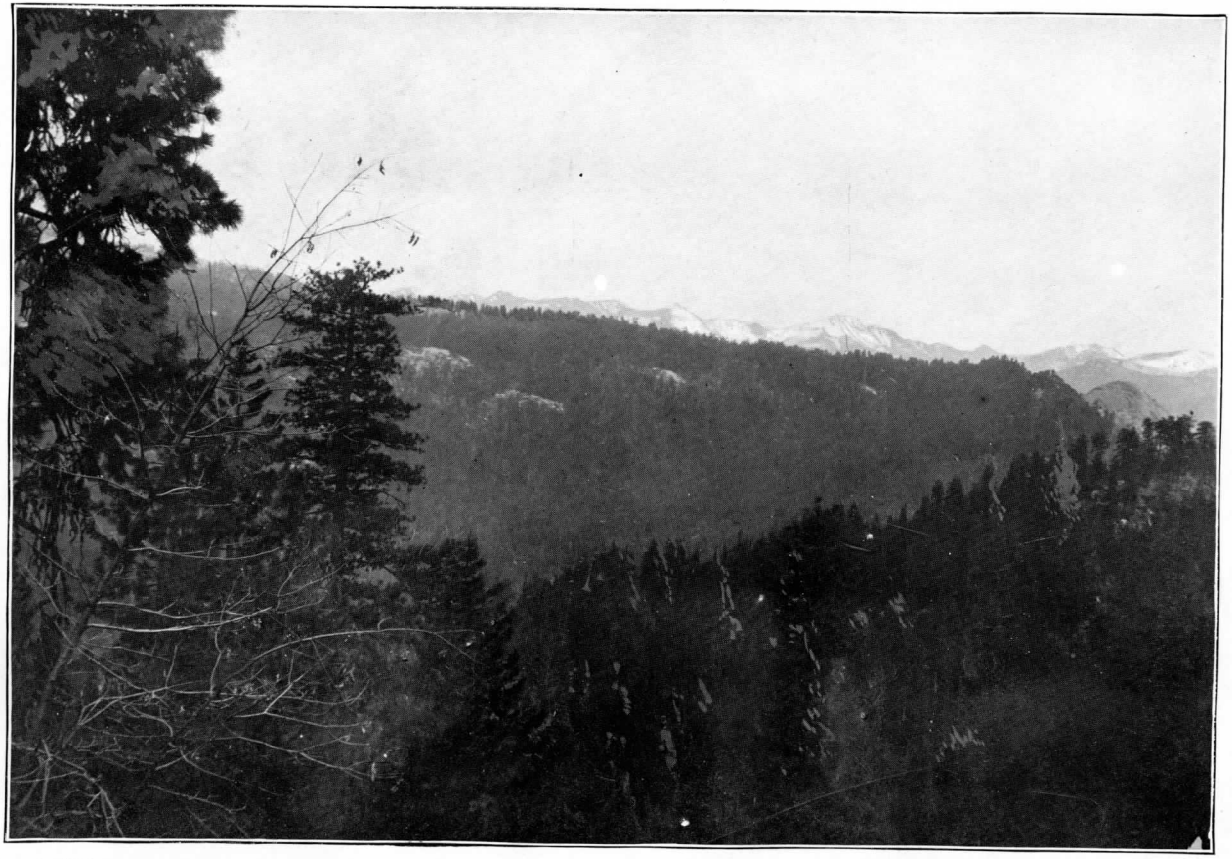
THE POINTS OF INTEREST OF THE SEQUOIA PARK.

The main scenic point of interest of the Sequoia Park is the Giant Forest. This forest is situated on a high table-land from 6,300 to 7,500 feet above sea level, bounded on the east by the bare granite Alta Peaks, on the north and west by the canyon of the Marble Fork, and on the south by the canyon of the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River.

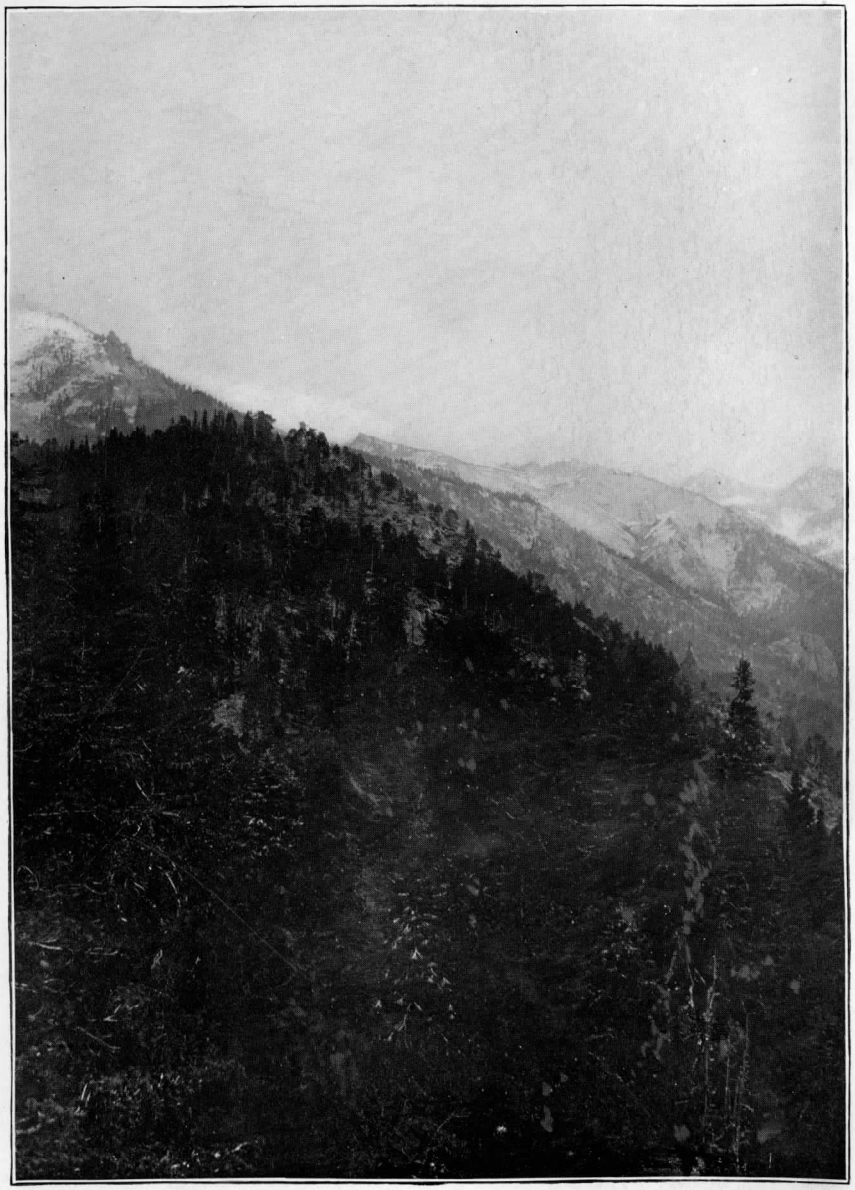
The forest is said to contain from 1,600 to 3,000 trees of the *Gigantea sequoia* species over 15 feet in diameter, and also numerous pines



MEADOW—GIANT FOREST.



VIEW FROM HALSTEAD MEADOWS ACROSS THE CANYON OF THE MARBLE FORK OF THE KAWEAH RIVER TO THE GIANT FOREST—SAW TOOTH RANGE IN THE DISTANCE.



ALTA PEAK AND SAW TOOTH RANGE EAST OF GIANT FOREST.

and firs almost as large. The largest of the sequoias is the General Sherman, said to be 105 feet in circumference at its base. The trees in the forest are so thickly grown that their branches touch, and the sun in places seldom finds the ground.

Other points of interest are Sunset and Moro rocks, on the western and southern edges of the table-land, vertical rocks hundreds of feet in height, and affording fine views of the San Joaquin Valley. Marble Falls, where the Marble Fork cuts through a marble ridge over 1,500 feet in height, and as seen from Admiration Point, 3,000 feet above the canyon, affords one of the finest views in the world. Across the Middle Fork, a mile or two south of Moro Rock, is seen the beautiful Castle Rocks, of white granite, needle-shaped, and a couple of hundred feet or more in altitude. East of the forest are the Alta Meadows, from Panoramic Point, in which is seen a circle of magnificent views of beautiful mountain ranges and the San Joaquin Valley.

THE ALTITUDES IN THE PARK.

During the present summer Professor Dudley, of Leland Stanford University, took some of the altitudes in the park and very kindly furnished me some of them, which are as follows:

	Feet.
Trail from Weisher's Mill to Giant Forest:	
Mineral King road, just below Weisher's Mill	6,300
Bear Gap, above Atwell's Mill, north	8,250
Harmon Meadows	6,900
Cliff Canyon Crossing	5,500
Redwood Meadow	5,800
Middle Fork Crossing, Kaweah River	5,900
Bear Paw Meadows	7,350
Buck Canyon Crossing	6,500
Alta Peak trail	9,100
Panther Gap	8,100
Tharp's log cabin, Giant Forest	6,550
Round Meadows	6,300
Trail crossing Marble Fork	5,000
Colony Mill	5,400
Halstead Meadows	6,800

THE GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARK.

This park is only 2 miles square, and is in very bad condition. Nothing has ever been done to clear away the débris of fallen timber and pine needles that lie at the foot of the General Grant and other sequoia trees of this fine grove. Over 125 large sequoias were counted in this park this season.

A few hundred dollars expended in clearing up the fallen timber and raking away the pine needles from the grove would make this a beautiful park indeed, and it is respectfully recommended that $1,000 be appropriated for this purpose.

The line of communication from the Grant Park over to the post-office at Millwood, Fresno County, Cal., 4½ miles distant by road, is almost impassable, as the bridges are rotten.

The supplies are hauled in from Exeter over a different road. This road is also in bad condition and the bridges rotten.

It is respectfully recommended that $1,000 be expended in repairing these roads.

Captain Cole, Sixth Cavalry, is now engaged in building a fence

and trail around the park, for which $2,500 was appropriated in the sundry civil bill approved June 6, 1900. Work began September 8, 1900.

As this amount will not be sufficient to complete the work, on account of the insufficient estimate for labor, it is respectfully recommended that $500 additional be appropriated for this work.

It is respectfully recommended that a forest ranger be permanently located in the General Grant Park after the fence is built. It will be a great saving to the Government on account of expense of hauling forage there, and be more efficient, as he will be there the entire year. His duties should be to keep the fence repaired, and all brush and fallen timber and leaves to be kept away from the fence and from the large sequoia trees in the park, the rubbish to be hauled off and burned.

ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE PARK.

The Sequoia Park has a value far beyond its natural scenic wonders in its storage capacity for supplying water for the San Joaquin Valley.

The country watered by the main Kaweah River has been converted from a stock-raising to a wheat-growing and from the latter to a vast fruit-growing country, in which millions have been invested.

The Sequoia Park and the mountains immediately to the eastward are the reservoir for this valuable section of country.

I have been reliably informed that the parties who own tracts of land in the Giant Forest contemplate erecting a sawmill and cutting the timber from their land as soon as the road is opened to the Giant Forest. This scheme, if carried out, will practically destroy the forest and the park, and will be the ruination of the fruit ranches now watered by the Kaweah River. It is therefore necessary that prompt action be taken by the Government to prevent this despoliation. It is said that the amount of water reaching the valley is growing less each year.

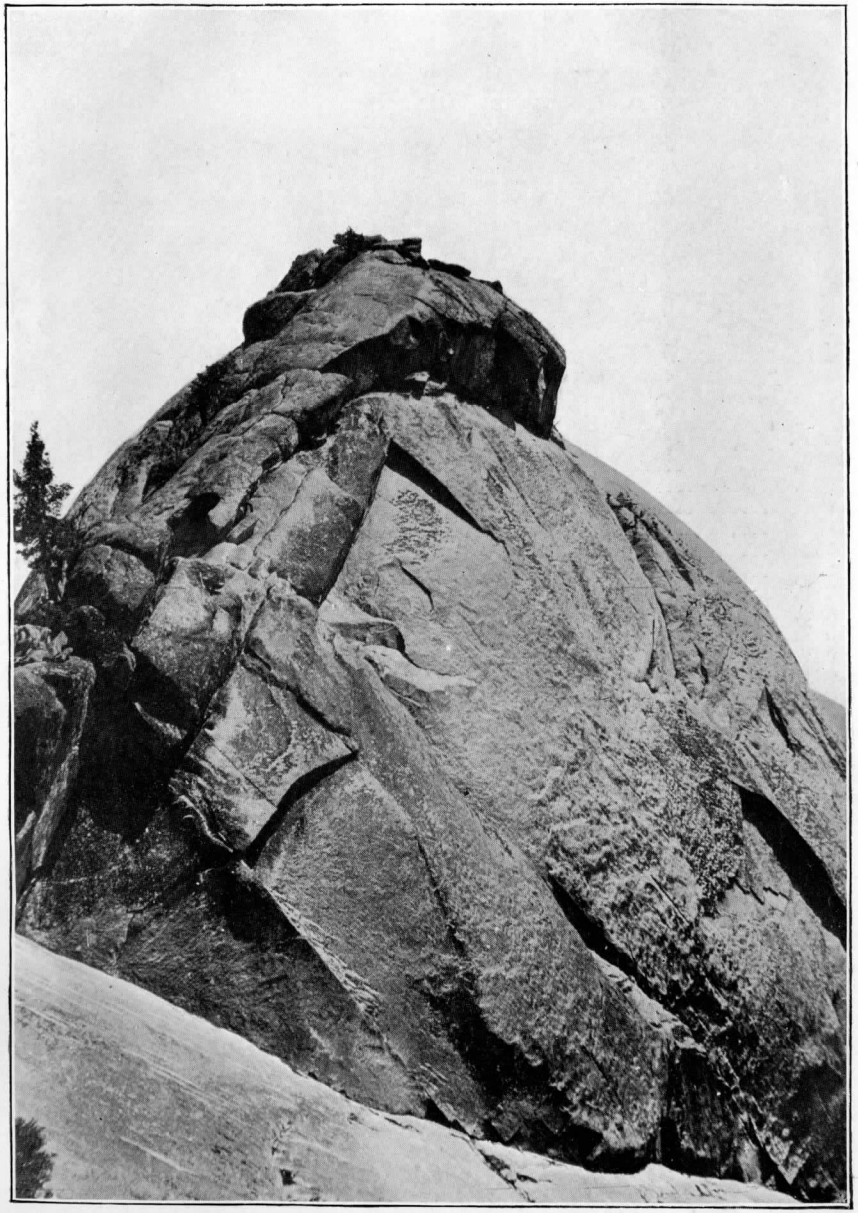
The meadows in the park can easily be converted into reservoir lakes by damming the lower portions and stocked with fish, thus adding to the beauty and usfulness of the park.

The great fall of the rivers that flow through the park, being thousands of feet in the distance of a few miles, afford valuable facilities for electric-power plants for pumping purposes for irrigation in the valley, as very little water runs above the surface of the ground in summer. The Mount Whitney Power Company has already put in a plant at an expense of nearly half a million dollars on the East Fork of the Kaweah River, just west of the park, and is of immense value to the portion of the San Joaquin Valley where its lines extend. Other plants will be needed in the near future to furnish power to irrigate the increasing acreage of orchards of citrus fruits, for which the soil and climate of this section of country are favorably adapted.

RÉSUMÉ OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

First. That two forest rangers be employed in the Sequoia Park during the period while the troops are in winter quarters at the Presidio, to protect the game and timber and look to the condition of the roads and repair trails.

Second. That an accurate topographical survey of the parks be made by the United States Geological Survey.



MORO ROCK, SOUTHWEST CORNER OF TABLE-LAND OF GIANT FOREST, OVERLOOKING MIDDLE FORK OF KAWEAH RIVER, ABOUT 5,000 FEET BELOW.

Third. That the park boundary lines be extended eastward to Mount Whitney and the main Sierra divide and northward to take in the Kings River Canyon.

Fourth. That permanent summer camps be made at the Giant Forest and Kaweah post-office, and that the troop headquarters be located in the Giant Forest.

Fifth. That a forest ranger be required to live at all seasons in the General Grant Park, to protect the fence and keep it and the sequoia grove clear from fallen timber and leaves to avoid fire.

ESTIMATES.

Improvement of the Sequoia National Park.

For the completion of the road to the Giant Forest, including the construction of the necessary bridges and culverts	$10,000
For the improvement and repair of the Old Colony Mill road	1,000
For building a road around through the Giant Forest from the Round Meadows (the end of the road to the Giant Forest), in a circular direction, via Moro Rock, Tharp's log cabin, the General Sherman tree, Circular Meadow, and back to Round Meadow	4,000
For building a trail from the Giant Forest to the Mineral King road near Weisher's Mill	1,500
For building a trail from the Giant Forest northerly to Kings River Canyon	1,000
For building a trail from the Giant Forest east to the Alta Meadows	500
For expense of commission to appraise private lands in the parks	500

Improvement of the General Grant National Park.

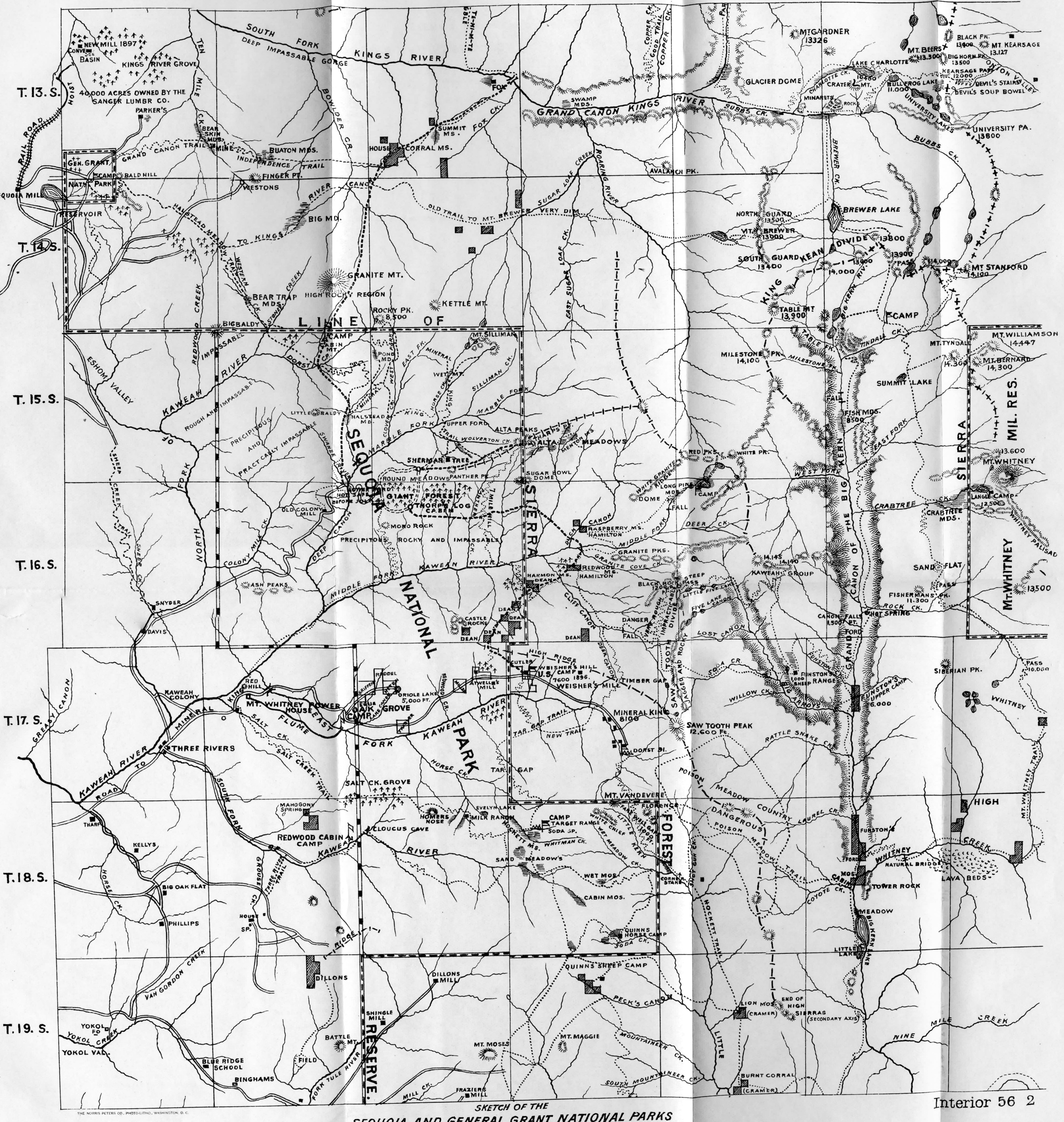
For completing fence and trail around the park	500
For repairing roads to Millwood and Exeter	1,000
For removing fallen timber in vicinity of the General Grant sequoia tree	1,000
Total	21,000

Very respectfully submitted.

FRANK WEST,
Captain, Ninth Cavalry, Acting Superintendent.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C.

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ROAD TO GIANT FOREST, ...

EXTENSION AROUND FOREST, ...

TRAILS, PROPOSED, ...

SKETCH OF THE
SEQUOIA AND GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL PARKS
and the
SIERRA FOREST RESERVE
In their Immediate Vicinity
Surveyed and drawn by
2d Lieut. M.F. Davis, 4th Cav'y A.E.O.
1896.

Interior 56 2

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY,
GENERAL RECORD,
1901
Enclosure No. 1
To accompany No. B 43