

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

April 16, 1951

### **In a Flood of Controversy**

Monterey and California in general was most fortunate to have Newton B. Drury chosen by the California State Parks Commission as chief of the California Division of Parks and Beaches. He is now installed in that position as of April 10, with offices in the State Building in Sacramento. Mr. Drury is by no means a stranger to California. He pioneered California's Save the Redwoods League for 21 years and had much to do with setting up California's state parks. Ten years ago he was appointed national park chief by Harold L. Ickes, former secretary of the Interior.

On March 30, Mr. Drury stepped down from the post of director of National Park Service. He stepped out in a flood of controversy between America's 18 national conservation organizations who announced resentment over Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman's request that Drury resign, and the former Secretary of the Interior's volunteered opinion that Drury's "record in Washington was not such as to entitle him to any reward."

The above quotation is from a telegram which Ickes sent to Governor Earl Warren at Sacramento, protesting to the selection of Newton Drury to fill the vacancy in the state parks left through the resignation of A.E. Henning. The Governor's answer was that he had known Newton B. Drury since both were freshmen at the University of California in 1908 and that he had always considered him a very superior person ... an outstanding conservationist. He continued: "I am sure you understand that under the circumstances, it is difficult for me to think ill of him."

Waldo G. Leland, former chairman of the National Parks Service advisory board, said Drury "has proved himself to be one of the ablest and strongest officials and one of the most resolute and courageous defenders of the national interest that the Department of the Interior has ever had."

Leland's newspaper letter summarized Drury's administration as "notable for the development of the service ... (but) especially notable because Mr. Drury has not only resisted the pressure of predatory interests, but also has been inflicted by the needs and plausible demands of the war situation."

The testimonial presented to Drury by the conservationists' meeting in Washington before his departure to motor across the continent to California, said in part.

"We ... desire to record our appreciation to your distinguished services and to express our sincere regret that these services should now come to an end.

"You have been the chief custodian of our country's greatest treasures ... You have held high the ideals of a branch of the public service which has been notable for its ideals and its loyalty to them, and you have maintained and enhanced its great tradition."

The testimonial was signed by the American Science and History Society, American Forestry Association, American Museum of Natural History, American Nature Association, American Planning and Civic Association, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Izaak Walton League of America, National Audubon Society, National Park Association, National Wildlife Federation, Save the Redwoods League, Smithsonian Institute, Conservation Foundation, Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, Wilderness Society and Wildlife Management Institute.

Mr. Drury has been consistently interested in the historical values in Monterey and has assisted in many ways in acquisition and preservation of historic sites and buildings here. It was Mr. Drury who assisted tremendously in accomplishing the acquisition of the Old Custom House for the State of California from the federal government when a group in Monterey generously contributed the \$10,000 necessary to match the state funds for the purchase of the building and reservation. He said then that the Custom House was "California's primary landmark."

Mr. Aubrey Drury of San Francisco, a brother of Newton Drury, is the president of the California Historical Society.