

TRAVEL USA

Is Travel the Third Largest "Industry" in the U.S.A.?

The transportation, accommodation, and servicing of travelers has become one of the largest business enterprises in the United States.

It is difficult to establish the relative importance of travel in comparison with other revenue-producing enterprises. Economists and statisticians as a general rule have not become aware of the importance of travel and do not include it as a specific item in their calculations.

The national income for 1947 totaled \$202,081 million, according to the Department of Commerce, with manufacturing the largest item (\$61,715 million); wholesale and retail trade next (\$37,531 million); and agriculture third (\$19,287 million). Seven other classifications follow in diminishing order.

Travel expenditures, as such, are hidden in most of these items—but easily recognizable. Travel is of utmost importance to the welfare of the manufacturing industry. The manufacture of automobiles, buses, railroad locomotives and passenger coaches, ships, airplanes, kitchen and restaurant equipment, many items of clothing, sporting goods, and countless other commodities is dependent to a large degree on the volume of travel.

The same comment applies not only to wholesale and retail trade but to agriculture, since vast quantities of raw and processed foods are required for hotels, restaurants, and food stores catering to the tourist trade.

This all points to an important fact. The public carriers, hotels and resorts, manufacturers, service enterprises, Government agencies, educational institutions, research groups, advertising firms, and others trying to serve the traveling public are in critical need of comprehensive statistics on the value, volume, and trends of travel. It is about time that economists and statisticians began to realize the importance of travel in the national economy and to include it in their calculations.

We know that approximately \$12 billion was spent in 1948 on interstate travel. This figure can be substantiated by surveys conducted by State and private organizations.

In addition, at least an equal sum must be added to cover intrastate travel; that is, travel by local people to points *within* their own State. The registration blotter at any resort or hotel will demonstrate that a large percentage of its business comes from people from the home State. Local and interstate travel in 1948 amounted, therefore, to at least \$24 billion.

Compare this \$24 billion with agriculture's \$19 billion, a part of which already includes travel.

How much longer will it be necessary for travel officials to endure a lifting of the eyebrows and run a gamut of argument each time they assert that travel is the third largest industry in the U.S.A.?

An encouraging note is struck by Dr. Harold G. Moulton, president of the Brookings Institution of Washington, in his book, "Controlling Factors in Economic Development." Under "recreation and travel," Dr. Moulton states that "the largest projected rate of increase (33-fold) in consumer outlays is in this broad field." He predicts that within the next 100 years expenditures for recreation and travel will far surpass all other consumer outlays, including "shelter and home maintenance," "attire and personal care," "food and nutrition," and "health and education."

J. L. B.

FRONT COVER

San Jacinto monument, 570 feet high, near Houston, commemorating this battle for Texan independence.

BACK COVER

Winter visitors to Biloxi, Miss., chief Gulf resort city, see this picturesque fishing fleet in Back Bay; submitted by Anthony V. Raquin, secretary of the Biloxi Chamber of Commerce, as typical of the tourist charm of this area.

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as a medium for the exchange of ideas beneficial to the development of travel. TRAVEL USA describes services offered to the industry and the traveling public by the United States Travel Division and other organizations in the travel field. Free on request to organizations and individuals engaged in travel and related activities.

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