

# Chieftain

in Wallowa County

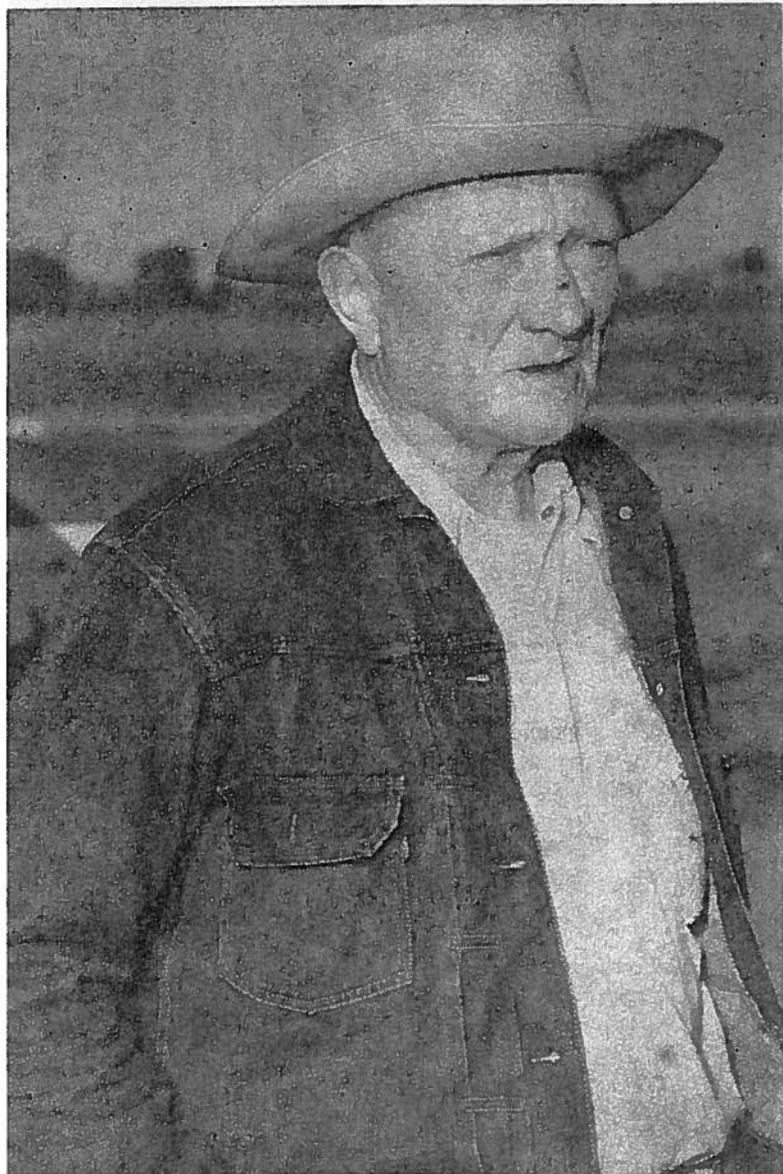
August 3/61

August 3, 1961

Enterprise

## Chief Joseph

### Douglas Opposes Minam Road



United States Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas flew in Saturday to attend the afternoon rodeo program of Chief Joseph Days. He has been a regular spectator at the show for a number of years.

In an interview with a Chieftain reporter before flying to Red's Horse ranch on the Minam river, Justice Douglas complimented the Joseph Chamber of Commerce for putting on an outstanding show and spoke out vigorously in opposition to the plans proposed by the Forest Service to build roads up the Minam river. He said that he would like to see the whole Minam river drainage, "starting six or seven miles up the river," made into a wilderness area.

"Our population pressure is growing so rapidly we need to do something to make it possible for the next generation to find roadless areas where they can really discover America", Douglas said. "The Minam is one of a very few precious bits of wilderness we have left. I have been in most of the wilderness areas in the United States and there are very, very few such areas left.

"The Wallowa mountains are very unique and the beauty of the Minam area should be preserved. Roads, campsites, and logging will change the whole character of this beautiful country and a pure mountain stream will be destroyed. People can get into this country hiking and on horseback, if they want to, and there are miles of other mountain areas where they can drive.

"Once you get all the mountains opened up with roads there will be no chance for anyone to escape the parades of cars. We need picnic areas and campsites for people who want to go to such places by cars, but we also need to take care of the other people who want to get away from cars and roads."

Douglas said that he is "alarmed" at the rate our good timber areas are disappearing. The Minam, he said, "symbolizes the need to start locking up some of our logged-over land so that nature can regenerate it for the next hundred or two hundred years."

"Do you know," Douglas said, "that last year there were 200,000 hikers in the Great Smoky mountains, and these mountains

are not much more extensive than the Wallawas. People are starving for such places."

"We have built up in our American school books an image of America in which pioneers are heralded for their work in leveling the wilderness and opening this country to agriculture and industry. But we need a new psychology now; we need new textbooks which emphasize that wilderness is not something to be destroyed now, but a heritage to be preserved. Schools need to do more teaching of the great need for conservation. Our forest schools are geared primarily to serve the timber industry, and there is very little in the curriculum on the great need for the protection of recreational values."

"Two years ago I was in the high Sierras and hiked in to Garnet lake at an elevation of about 10,000 feet. There were 1,000 people camped there! With this rapid growing use of wilderness areas we may have to place some restrictions on their use, rather than

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objecting that these areas do not have more traffic."

Douglas said that he and Senator Morse, and Senator Jackson of Washington, had had conversations with Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman about the Minam and other roadless areas and that it was his understanding that a 'stop order' had been issued against any further road building plans in this area pending a full study of the recreational potential. But he urged local groups interested in establishing a wilderness area covering the Minam drainage to work diligently to this end.

Turning from the Minam issue Douglas said that he is very much disturbed over the Berlin crisis. "Berlin", he declared, "is negotiable. A plan should be worked out to place this city under the control of the United Nations. War is absolutely unthinkable. The other day I was talking to an eminent physicist who told me that new nuclear bombs now being built could be dropped on the United States or any other country with a saturation effect which would utterly wipe out every living creature and plant in one brief attack. We must face this prospect when we think about war."