

6. *Harvesting of mature timber.*—From time to time the suggestion has been made that "mature" or "overripe" timber should be harvested. The Pueblo does not believe such harvesting of timber in the Blue Lake area is necessary; indeed, in 1905 a representative of the U.S. Geological Survey reported to the Department of Agriculture that traditional Indian practices regarding mature timber had had the highly beneficial effect of preventing floods on the Rio Pueblo and recommended their emulation in other forest areas (exhibit 9). At the present time mature timber is not methodically harvested in wilderness areas under Forest Service management. The same policy can surely be followed in the Blue Lake area. To harvest mature timber in the Blue Lake area would intolerably disrupt the religious life of the Indians; if continued over a long period it would destroy the foundation of the religion, which is the Blue Lake area.

The long history of the Indians' attachment to the Blue Lake Area and of conflict between their claims and the policies of the Forest Service is summarized below. The Government's original intention was to preserve the area covered by the bill for exclusive Indian use. That intension was reaffirmed in the act of May 31, 1933, and has never been abandoned. But the growth of Forest Service programs to develop the economic and recreational uses of the land has generated conflicts within the Government and placed intolerable pressure on the Pueblo. The time has now come to reaffirm the Government's original and basic policy regarding this land, to scrap the half-measures of the permit system, and to transfer ownership of the land to the Indians. Not only will the bill resolve the regrettable conflict over use of the land, but it will save payment of monetary compensation to the Pueblo under the Indian Claims Act. Perhaps most importantly, the bill will guarantee the Indians' religious freedom and support their cultural growth and progress.

ANALYSIS OF H.R. 3306

The bill provides for a trust patent to Taos Pueblo covering 50,000 acres. Approximately 2,000 acres of the land described in the present bill now is included within the Wheeler Peak Wilderness Area; that acreage should be deleted from the bill. The map attached hereto shows the location of the land involved; for convenience the relevant sections of the area have been marked as tracts 1 through 6.

Tract 1 is approximately 3,929 acres in the drainage area of the Rio Lucero. This tract was acquired by the Forest Service in 1950 as the Will Ed Harris tract No. 2. Although the tract had been in private ownership for some years before 1950, the land was unfenced and the Taos Indians have always occupied and used the area. The only convenient access to the property is from lands owned by the Pueblo, and the owner of the property never excluded Indian stock from grazing thereon. The Forest Service itself has recognized that the tract has always been used by the Indians (Ex. 71, 72).

Tract 2 is approximately 3,270 acre in the Rio Lucero drainage. Like tract 1, this area has always been used by the Indians and has been covered by a cooperative agreement between the Pueblo and the Forest Service since September 6, 1933 (Ex. 40).