

Senator HANSEN. It is your opinion that the area, the lakes, the mountains, the land itself, by use throughout the centuries has become of special significance to the Indians in the practice of their religion and that is the fact rather than the possibility that certain shrines could be moved and transported?

Mr. UDALL. The truth of the matter is that you must study the culture of these Indians and look at this whole history, the shrines, the lake, the setting. In other words their religion is intimately involved with nature. Here is the highest mountain in the State of New Mexico, I believe, a beautiful natural setting. The watershed drains right down into the place where they have lived for eight or 10 centuries and the religion is connected intimately with nature. The shrine is connected with the lake and it is not a cathedral of some kind.

Senator HANSEN. You feel an injustice was done the Indian when these lands were taken from them as a Presidential proclamation and made a part of the national forest?

Mr. UDALL. One of the great moments to me in conservation history was that day in 1906 when Gifford Pinchot and Teddy Roosevelt were down on their knees in the White House trying to describe areas of public domain forest land to be put into national forests by executive proclamation. But they had to act hastily and I have enough respect for Teddy Roosevelt's memory to believe if it had been pointed out to him that here was a tribe of Indians that lived there a thousand years or more with a particular tract of land that had special religious significance, it might have been excluded. This was not taken as a result of the Indian tribe making war on the white man as he came in; it was taken with a swoop of the pen in 1906.

The question is whether we should right this wrong.

Senator HANSEN. You are saying that those were well intentioned efforts undertaken by the President in 1906?

Mr. UDALL. I know they were, I know what his intentions were but the point is they were not aware of the fact this is a special case because they were acting in great haste.

Senator HANSEN. In light of the history and continued pleadings of this tribe since that time it is your feeling that the way really to do justice to the Taos Indians is to enact this legislation which would reserve this 48,000-acre tract for their rather exclusive use?

Mr. UDALL. That is right. That is our view of what should be done.

Senator HANSEN. Thank you.

Mr. UDALL. Senator Hatfield.

Senator HATFIELD. Mr. Chairman, without getting into the specific issues as to whether or not we should begin giving the Indians land in lieu of money claims, because really I think that issue might be more carefully studied than it has been up to this point. As I say without getting onto that question, I am concerned about the testimony on page 5 of your report.

I have some documents that relate to this subject. These are some House documents I would like to quote from and, Mr. Chairman, I would like to engage in a series of questions here if I could.

As you realize, Mr. Secretary, your tenure will be up in about 3 or 4 months but the rest of us on this committee will have to be dealing with these issues as they may confront us from time to time because of what we do here on this case.