

STATEMENT OF HON. CLINTON P. ANDERSON, A U.S. SENATOR
FROM THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Senator ANDERSON. Many years of public service have enabled me to make many Indian friends. I have listened to their complaints and suggestions. I have studied their problems. Since becoming a Senator in 1949 I have introduced or cosponsored more than 20 bills, now laws, to benefit the New Mexico Indians alone.

This legislation has brought about improvements in education, health care and sanitation facilities, road construction and road maintenance, and transfer of land to the Indians. In these efforts I have tried consistently to weigh legislation against two standards: the good of the Indians and the good of the general public. Rarely has there been a conflict.

I have long been familiar with the importance the Taos Pueblo Indians have given to Blue Lake and other areas for religious reasons. I have been sympathetic with their desires to preserve the privacy and integrity of their religious practices and I have tried to insure this through legislative efforts over the past decade.

In 1957 and again in 1959 I introduced bills to increase the special use permit area which the Indians had been granted in 1940 by 20,000 acres to make a total of 50,000 acres of forest land available to them for their religious and other traditional uses. The Indians rejected this solution and instead insisted upon trust title to 50,000 acres.

In 1956 I introduced by request S. 3085 to grant to the Taos Indians 50,000 acres in trust. In discussions with the Pueblo and the Pueblo's attorney I suggested that they include in this bill everything they wanted to that a full and open hearing could be held on all of their claims. Strong opposition was voiced by the Board of County Commissioners of Taos County, numerous residents of the town of Taos, and elsewhere in New Mexico, various conservation groups, and the U.S. Forest Service.

As S. 3085 in its essential provisions was similar to H.R. 3306, the bill now under consideration, I shall not specify the reasons for the opposition at this time as they will come out, I am sure, in the course of this hearing. What readily became apparent in those earlier hearings was that there was strong conflict between the Indian good and the public good.

To resolve this conflict I attempted compromise. I suggested that the land which the Indians identified as the most sacred—approximately 3,150 acres including Blue Lake, Star Lake, and Waterbird Lake—be granted to the Pueblo in either fee or trust and that the use permit initially granted in 1940 be continued for the balance of 30,000 acres in the Rio Pueblo watershed.

I introduced two bills in 1967 to accomplish this objective, one granting the 3,150 acres in fee and the other in trust. Since the Indians expressed no interest to even discuss these proposals and further indicated their unwillingness to accept less than H.R. 3306, no action has been taken on these bills.

As recently as 2 months ago, I suggested another avenue to explore which would have enlarged the present permit area to 48,000 acres and which would have granted the Indians virtually everything they seek short of ownership. Again the Indians stated their unwillingness