

it, their church, from such violation. I couldn't help but think and feel that their abuse of the area was no way to treat a church. Be that as it may, it was suddenly surprising to us that the mess did not cover a larger area. I had had the impression that most if not all of the tribe participated in the ceremonials. It was the opinion of the Forest Ranger that not more than 40 to 60 Indians had come to Blue Lake. In my opinion the signs indicated that the Ranger was right.

Our stay at Blue Lake did not exceed one hour. We departed, leaving nothing but our tracks, and proceeded directly to Bear Lake, which is open to fishing and overnight camping. At Bear Lake, all the trash was in the pit. The campfires were buried and no green timber had been cut.

My visit to Blue Lake and subsequent inquiries revealed that the Indians are not using the lake to the degree claimed. No Indians visited the lake on the day of our visit. We would have seen them. It is impossible to visit Blue Lake during winter because of deep snow and blizzard conditions. The elevation is near 11,000 feet. Forest Service employees from the Pueblo reported for duty during every day of the ceremonials even though time off was permitted to them. Visitors to the Pueblo notice no apparent change in numbers or activity during the ceremonials. A Game Department pilot who has flown the area frequently reports that he has never seen any smoke or other signs of activity at Blue Lake.

There are those who welcome this apparent decline in the old order. More liberal members of the tribe view the old religion as a hindrance to economic growth and the well-being of their people. According to some, the tribal council has impeded progress and the personal freedom and civil rights of those within the tribe who would disagree. Congressman Anthony Fernandez of New Mexico revealed such in his statement on the floor of the House (see Congressional Record, May 18, 1950). According to Congressman Fernandez, the individual members of the Taos Pueblo have no protection under our Bill of Rights. They are subject to the arbitrary dictates of the council. They have been denied the right to install modern utilities in their homes. Their right to vote has been denied under threat of arrest. They have no right to self-government since the council picks its own new members. And "They have no freedom of worship in the religion of their choice."

At this point, Mr. Chairman, I think it would be wise to consider who the proponents of this bill are. There are a number of sincere individuals who are sympathetic to the cause of the Indians and who support this bill in the belief that it is in the Indians' best interests. Many of these people recall injustices done the American Indian in the past. They are unaware of all the facts in the case. They believe what they have been told about the Indians' religious freedoms being impaired. They are moved by emotion and sympathy for the red man. However, it should be remembered that the Taos Indians have no broken treaties with the United States. The lands were not taken by miners and settlers as occurred in the Black Hills and the Cimarron Strip. The opposite is true. Lands have been restored to the Pueblo and free use of other land has been granted. And they have not been mistreated as were the Navajos during their confinement at Fort Sumner.

As for the attorneys representing the Indians in this claim, no elaboration on their motives are necessary.

That leaves the Indians themselves. Mr. Chairman, I think it is pertinent that the Committee recognize the individuals from Taos Pueblo who are pursuing this claim and who have committed tribal funds belonging to all the Taos Indians. It is principally, if not solely, the members of the council who are the protagonists.

Mr. Chairman, the ceremonials at Blue Lake, while not documented are not so secret that it is impossible to determine that it is the members of the council who are the principle beneficiaries, if that is the proper word, of the rituals conducted at Blue Lake. They are the principal participants.

It is not denied that grazing of Indian livestock will be increased if H.R. 3306 is passed. More lands will accrue to the tribe. The restraining influence of the Forest Service against increasing livestock numbers beyond capacity will be seriously weakened if not removed entirely.

All of the Pueblo's livestock are owned by ten to fifteen individuals. The livestock owners must belong to the Tribal Grazing Association in order to graze their livestock on the Special Permit Area. It is the council that determines who may belong to the Association. And, strangely enough, Mr. Chairman, it is the members of the council who own practically all, if not all, of the livestock. Practically all, if not all, of the livestock owners are council members. I'm told that Severino Martinez, the former Governor and one of the leading principals in this cause owns the lion's share of all the livestock in the Pueblo.