

fied at the hearing that the flood control easement was granted without any such requirement, and the Indians received no payment for the easement.

Mr. Gunter's statements characterizing the Taos Indians' religion as a declining "peyote cult" are untrue, and Professor Spicer has filed a statement with the Committee rebutting the interpretation of his book "Cycles of Conquest" which was relied upon by Mr. Gunter. Mr. Gunter's distorted views concerning the Taos Indians and their religion should not be given credence by the Subcommittee.

With respect to Mr. Gunter's statements concerning the use of Blue Lake he purports to have studied during his spy-trip on September 6, 1968, the Indians have responded directly to the Committee concerning the findings of their own officials with respect to the condition in which the Blue Lake vicinity was left at the termination of the ceremonials on August 25, 1968. Mr. Gunter's statement that "the Indians have made no attempt to keep the area clean" is not supported by facts. We trust the Subcommittee will not espouse Mr. Gunter's clear prejudices against the Indians.

*John W. Little.* Mr. Little states that, "The facts just don't substantiate the Indians' claim that their Indian religion is being threatened by the Forest Service." Mr. Little's statement suggests that a reasonable white man would not agree with the Indians; therefore, their good faith in making their claim is to be questioned. We submit that it is irrelevant whether or not a white man would react as have the Indians to prior Forest Service policies or activities in the Area. The true issue is whether the Indians truly believe that Forest Service activities or policies threaten their religion and their culture. On that issue there can simply be no question: the Pueblo has asserted its desire to obtain ownership of the Rio Pueblo Watershed for more than 60 years, and their present effort is being conducted at great economic cost to a Pueblo which has few economic resources. They would surely not bear such burdens nor maintain their demands for so long a period if they did not deeply and sincerely believe that their religion is vitally threatened. Moreover, the provisions of H.R. 3306 depriving the Indians of any significant economic benefits from transfer of the Blue Lake Area fully protect against the possibility that the Indians have raised the religious issue as a subterfuge.

Mr. Little exalts the conservation record of the Forest Service while derogating the record of the BIA. It is perhaps significant that the Forest Service itself has not argued that the BIA cannot adequately protect and conserve the Rio Pueblo Watershed under the terms of H.R. 3306. We do not believe Mr. Little has proven that the BIA cannot effectively protect the Watershed.

Both Mr. Little and County Commissioner Martinez state that protection of the Watershed is vital to preserve the flow of water in the Rio Pueblo. The Indians agree, and H.R. 3306 specifically provides such protection. There is absolutely no reason to believe that the quantity or quality of water in the Rio Pueblo would be diminished by the enactment of H.R. 3306.

With respect to Mr. Little's photographs and the alleged findings on his trip to Blue Lake on September 6, we wish to point out that he has no proof for his statement, "The Indians had left the area in a mess." Mr. Little was in the area 12 days after the Indian ceremonies had terminated, and he has not eliminated the possibility that the trash he photographed was left by white trespassers. The Indians have responded directly to the Committee concerning their knowledge of the clean condition of the area and the fact that the trees cut by a power saw could not have been cut by the Indians. We cannot explain the discrepancies between Mr. Little's statements and photographs and the Indians' statements; if both parties are telling the truth, the trees were cut and the trash was left by white trespassers who entered the area between August 25 and September 6.

Mr. Little's statements challenging the Indians' use of the Rio Pueblo Watershed clearly reveal the practice of certain Forest Service employees of spying upon the Indians for purposes of determining the extent of their use of the Watershed. It is precisely such observation by alien eyes that the Indians object to as destructive of their religious practices. The fact that Forest Service pilots survey the Area from above and its employees patrol the Area on the ground should indicate vividly to the Subcommittee that the Indians are being denied privacy in the practice of their religion by the Forest Service. That invasion of the Indians' religious freedom is now exacerbated by the Forest Service's clear intention to gather information for use in attacking the Indians' good faith and credibility.

Finally, Mr. Little's suggestion that the Pueblo's demand for ownership of the Watershed reflects only the wishes of a few old men who govern the Pueblo