

five (5) days and not twelve (12) as he states. Secondly, the estimate by the ranger that between forty (40) and sixty (60) persons had recently camped at the area was made by his examination of the trash and the quantity of such trash along with the number of camp fires. This accurate estimate of the number of people was corroborated by testimony of one young Indian girl who said she was among the forty-six (46) people from the tribe at the ceremonies.

When you consider the time lapse, the controlled access to the area, the accuracy of the ranger's estimate, and the quantity and nature of the refuse, it is just not likely that anyone other than the Indians themselves left the mess we saw.

I have information now that the Indians have since cleaned the area themselves and have taken newspaper people favorable to their cause into the area to show them how clean it is and how dirty the forest service cabin nearby is by contrast. I wonder if the refuse at the forest service cabin isn't the same transplanted trash.

It should also be recognized that we knew what we would find before we went to the area. It has been a well known fact for years that the forest service people have always had to clean the area after the August ceremonies. I'm sure the forest service would have to verify this if asked. Their records are full of direct reference to this problem. I have given the color photos I referenced in my letter of Oct. 7, 1968 to Mr. Little so he can reply directly to Mr. Schaab since he originally covered this matter in his statement presented at the hearings.

In summary, I wish to state that I am not questioning the Indians' right to practice their religion or religious practices in this area. I am convinced that their religious freedom is adequately protected by the present arrangement and that title to the land is not necessary to assure this freedom. The Indians cannot come forth with one shred of factual evidence to the contrary.

I am further convinced that this bill would set a precedent of far-reaching magnitude and any attempt by anyone to diminish this possibility is really too naive to stand up on the face of the actions of other tribes throughout the country.

I am also convinced that any study in depth of the issues involved clearly shows that the veil of sentiment and emotion that can be projected on religious grounds is indeed a convenient smoke screen to hide behind and that only the astute person is going to see this. It, therefore, becomes the duty of persons like yourself to turn on the fog penetrating light of truth and render the decision accordingly.

Yours truly,

N. P. GUNTER.

[Enclosures]

[From the Albuquerque Tribune, June 3, 1966]

PUEBLO OKAYS EASEMENT

TAOS, N. MEX., June 3—An easement providing land for a \$125,000 flood control project in Taos County has been signed by Taos Indian Pueblo.

The flood control project calls for construction of a dam in Las Cruces Arroyo on pueblo land. The dam would reduce the threat of high water from the arroyo flooding the south part of Taos during storms.

Indian officials had balked at signing the easement until the Taos town council put in writing its support of the pueblo's claim for 50,000 acres surrounding its sacred Blue Lake.

The town council met in special session to draft a letter voicing its support of the Indians' claim. Pueblo officials then signed the easement yesterday.

Phil Lovato, an official of the northern Rio Grande Resource Conservation and Development project, said funds are available to start work on the flood control project. He said work can begin as soon as bids are opened and estimated this would be three to four weeks.