

up there every year. We don't know the number because we don't bother to count. It is their prerogative to go up there. And you can't say that 40 people went up there, because that is absolutely untrue. Because a large majority, and I say almost 1,400 people that live there, believe in this Indian religion very strongly—very, very strongly. And I am speaking from the young point of view, because I know that the young adults at Taos Pueblo are very, very strong about this. I think the feeling grows stronger as we get a little bit older, every year. I know I look forward to this every year, and I try to make it home, if I can, for this.

Senator METCALF. Did you want to say something?

Mr. BERNAL. Mr. Chairman, I would like to be permitted to testify for the delegation from Taos Pueblo. I would be more free to answer some of these questions rather than defer to my Governor, and this would kind of take care of some of the delays. If you will permit me to do that, I will appreciate it.

Senator METCALF. Well, the question is there. I want somebody to answer it. I am not directing it to any specific person. This committee is after information.

Mr. BERNAL. Yes.

Senator METCALF. And we want you to help us in resolving this very difficult and complex question. These allegations have been made, and the only fair way in a hearing is to ask the people that know more about it than anybody else. Now how many people do you think went up to that ceremony during the month of August?

Mr. BERNAL. I would like to testify, Mr. Chairman.

Senator METCALF. Well, all right.

STATEMENT OF PAUL BERNAL, TAOS PUEBLO TRIBE

Mr. BERNAL. My name is Paul Bernal. I live in Taos Pueblo and I have been working for Taos Pueblo Council more than 20 years, and my father's and my mother's and relatives have been a strong traditional type of people. I have been working for the councils and the community affairs, and I have been helping interpreting, and I have been drawing information, to get a clear indication of the problems, and I have been closely in contact with this Blue Lake situation, the early part of my life, and I have been initiated into the Taos Pueblo Council. I have been authorized to become interpreter, and also their secretary, and I have been doing all kinds of services free of charge. I have not been paid for it, and I never received any kind of compensation from the tribe, and I am doing it on a volunteer basis.

Mr. Chairman, Taos Pueblo historical struggle on this Blue Lake situation now continues for more than 60 years after the taking of this Blue Lake, and the 48,000 acres. The taking happened on November 7, 1906, and during the taking, my Indians have been forming new education, and the people of Taos Pueblo Council. Therefore, it was the only negotiation—no interpretation.

No understanding about this taking whatsoever. So therefore, at that time the land was taken without any clarification whatsoever.

After 1906, the Blue Lake area became spoiled. The Blue Lake area of 48,000 acres has become disturbed, and for this group of people from the neighborhood to find freedom to exercise their religion is difficult. I have experienced this, and I want to tell this committee.