

These people have been suffering. This group of Indians feel that there is unjustification. Their very own land, a piece of the property they have been using for religion from the beginning of time has not been recognized by the U.S. Government—and with this experience, the Indians of Taos Pueblo felt that they should tell their American neighbors, their friends, about what is going on. I think today, here, that we are represented by an able lawyer, Mr. Bill Schaab. For the first time this documentation has been done completely.

I am sure, Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of the committee, that you will find all the justification by which came about H.R. 3306, and H.R. 3306 brings it out, and a lot of American people felt that there is justification in this bill.

Senator METCALF. With all due respect, and you have made a powerful statement here, the answer was not responsive, and I wonder if Mr. Schaab, if it is appropriate, and if there is nothing secret or violative of the religious rituals of the Taos Pueblo, if you would give us a breakdown, if you can find out, as to the number of people who participate in the religious ceremonies every year.

Senator HANSEN. Mr. Chairman.

Senator METCALF. Senator Hansen.

Mr. BERNAL. Mr. Chairman, I went up to Blue Lake this last August. 1,400 people, more than 75 percent of these people, had been up there to attend the ceremony.

Senator METCALF. Seventy-five percent of 1,400 people in your tribe?

Mr. BERNAL. Yes.

Senator METCALF. During the month of August?

Mr. BERNAL. Yes, I have been up there and seen it myself.

Senator METCALF. That is the answer that I wanted, and I thank you very much.

Mr. BERNAL. I can verify that statement. I can prove it, and if you want me to, I can get all the names of these people.

Senator METCALF. You are not under oath, and we will accept the statement. I just wanted to know.

Mr. BERNAL. Thank you very much.

Senator METCALF. Senator Hansen?

Senator HANSEN. No; you go ahead.

Senator METCALF. The next question I have concerns this very significant and important area, as I gather, for watershed. As far as this Senator is concerned, the most important use of our national forests and our public resources is watershed protection. Now what is your proposal to take care of the firefighting, in the event that this bill passes?

Mr. BERNAL. In the event, if H.R. 3306 should pass, we have what we call The Snowballs, the Taos Pueblo firefighters, who have been trained. This group is able to fight, and go out to these places and fight fires. We do not have money. We are a very, very poor group of Indians, but we can voluntarily protect this, on our own, which we have done long before the U.S. Government was involved in this—long before.

Senator METCALF. Go ahead.

Mr. BERNAL. Also the Bureau of Indian Affairs can assist us, when the Interior Department takes the responsibility to administer this area, and, therefore, the Bureau of Indian Affairs are well equipped,