

Mr. KELLEY. Thank you.

Senator ANDERSON. Could we put in some of these questions?

Senator METCALF. May I call the last witness?

Senator ANDERSON. Surely.

Senator METCALF. Mr. Clapper.

STATEMENT OF LOUIS S. CLAPPER, ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Mr. CLAPPER. I am Louis S. Clapper, Chief of the Division of Conservation Education, National Wildlife Federation, which has its national headquarters here in Washington, D.C. Ours is a private organization which seeks to further the cause of conservation through educational means. Affiliates of the federation are located in 49 States. These affiliates are composed of local groups who, when combined with associate members and other supporters of the National Wildlife Federation, number an estimated 2 million persons.

Mr. Chairman, we welcome the invitation to comment briefly upon H.R. 3306, S. 1624, and S. 1625, transferring ownership of certain lands in the Carson National Forest to the Pueblo de Taos of New Mexico.

In summary, we are opposed to H.R. 3306, as passed by the House, and believe that, at most, the Pueblo should be given the 3,150 acres that would be provided in S. 1625. While everyone is sympathetic to the needs and desires of the Taos Pueblo people, particularly with respect to their religious observances, it is our conviction that they already are being given the utmost consideration and land transfers would work to the detriment of the general public.

The House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, in acting on H.R. 3306 (H. Rept. 1490), said:

"The issue, therefore, is whether the Pueblo should be paid for the 50,000 acres, as ordered by the Indian Claims Commission, and the land retained in the national forest for the benefit of the public generally, or whether the land should be restored to the Pueblo. The Committee concluded that the equities are on the side of the Indians and that the land should be restored to the Pueblo. The Indians have a greater need for the land than does the public."

Mr. Chairman, the National Wildlife Federation differs with that conclusion for these basic reasons:

First. The Forest Service has issued a special permit to the Pueblo, which gives protection until the year 1990, with provision for a 50-year extension. Under this permit, the Pueblo has a veto over who visits the Blue Lake area at any time and non-Indians are not permitted to remain more than 24 hours. Camping and grazing is prohibited in the immediate Blue Lake area. Further, the Indians have exclusive use of the religious grounds during the ceremonial period.

Mr. Chairman, since we first opposed this proposal 2 years ago, we have been berated by several people who cannot understand how we can be so callous as to deny the Indians their sacred grounds. We are not attempting to deny these to the Indians. In fact, we revere and respect everyone's religious beliefs. However, from the point of view of religion alone, the Indians have exclusive control and use of the Blue Lake area. In fact, they already have everything they could expect to attain even through full ownership. If they want these conditions