

and willing to give back all lands everywhere to all Indians who ever used it we should not start doing it piecemeal!

Basically my reasons for opposing this legislation is that other interests as well as the interests of the Indians are vitally concerned. Furthermore, I am firmly convinced that to leave these lands in present status is definitely in the best interests of all concerned, including the Indians themselves, for both the present and the future.

The people of the adjacent Taos Valley, mostly Spanish Americans, and to some extent the people of Taos, are dependent for irrigation water upon water from this highly productive watershed. Their ancestors settled there before the Pilgrims landed on the New England Coast, and they have as much interest in the water and protection of the watershed as the Indians have. The watershed simply must be properly managed and protected permanently at all costs.

The U.S. Forest Service along with its administration and management of adjacent lands is very well equipped and qualified to continue to do that job as it has been doing it for three score years. The Taos Indians are not in a position to do so, and the reputation of the Department of the Interior in watershed protection in New Mexico is minimal compared to the Forest Service.

The Taos Indians have said that they want the area to be managed as Wilderness. Well and good, I think the public will agree. But let us remember that the Forest Service pioneered in establishment and management of Wilderness Areas. The great bulk of the existing Wilderness Areas are within the National Forests. On the other hand, the Department of the Interior's experience in management of Wilderness Areas is negligible.

Mr. Chairman, I am sure that this Committee wants to be fair to all concerned. Therefore, may I call attention to the fact that to turn this land over to the Indians, or set up to be held in trust for them, would be exceedingly unfair and discriminatory. Why? Because the Taos Indians are as well, if not better off, than the average Spanish American rural inhabitant of the area who depend upon agriculture for a meager livelihood. These Spanish Americans, like the Indians, are often classed as minority, poverty-stricken groups. Actually they are just good American citizens who have not quite been able to keep up with the times, the rapidly changing times. Land-wise in the Taos area they are much poorer than the Indians.

In addition to the original Taos Indian Pueblo Spanish Land Grant, the Indians have acquired three additional tracts bringing their total land ownership to over 50,000 acres. There are about 1,000 Indians in that Pueblo. That means about 50 acres for each Indian. On the basis of a family consisting of five persons, that means that each Indian family has 250 acres. On the other hand, the average Spanish American farmer family in the adjacent Taos Valley owns only approximately 30 acres. Thus we see that these Indians already own eight times as much land per family as their neighbors, the rural non-Indians in the adjacent valley. It seems these people have as much justification for demanding a big slice of National Forest Lands as the Indians have. It would be gross discrimination to give lands to the Indians and not to these people.

Now let's take a look at the hereditary rights or ancestral claims to this land that we hear so much sentimental talk about. Any ancestral claims would have to be based upon very long continued use for specific purposes.

Timber? Certainly the Indians have no ancestral rights to or claims upon the timber on the area they are seeking to acquire because they cut no timber there until right recently. They did not need to for there was adequate timber for their needs closer in on their 25 square mile Pueblo Land Grant. In recent years they have cut some timber for vigas (pole roof or ceiling beams). While they have no ancestral rights to the timber, under the present status they have the privilege of cutting timber to meet their needs in accordance with sound forestry conservation practices.

What about grazing of livestock? It is highly pertinent to note that the Indians had no livestock until after the Spanish settlers came bringing livestock with them. So the Indians can have no ancestral rights to grazing ante-dating the Spanish immigration. It seems that the Taos Indians very gradually became regular owners of livestock, and that until about 1870 the numbers all told of livestock owned by them was insignificant. But a report of the United Pueblo Agency in 1941 indicates that in 1880 some irrigated lands were abandoned and that it may have been to convert it to pasture land for livestock.

In 1929 about 80 head of sheep were given to the Indians by the Government, but it seems they were never grazed on the Forest Range. Then in 1935 the Gov-