

F

THE



OPI TRIBE

P. O. BOX 123

ORAIBI, ARIZONA 86039

Joint Statement by

Mr. Clarence Hamilton
Hopi Tribal Chairman

and

Mr. Abbott Sekaquantewa,
Member, Hopi Tribal Council

and

Chairman Hopi Negotiating Committee
Claridge Hotel, Washington, D. C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 14, 1972

HOPi LEADERS ASK SENATE HEARINGS ON "STEIGER BILL" TO RESOLVE BITTER LAND
DISPUTE WITH NAVAJOS

"WE CHALLENGE THE NAVAJOS TO STOP THEIR LOBBYING ON THE STREETS OF WASHINGTON
AND IN THE CORRIDORS OF CONGRESS AND TO PLEAD THEIR CASE ON ITS MERITS BEFORE
THE UNITED STATES SENATE. WHY ARE THEY SO AFRAID OF THE LIGHT OF A HEARING
ROOM?"

Mr. Clarence Hamilton, Hopi Tribal
Chairman

We have come to Washington today to ask the United States Senate to
hold hearings on the Steiger Bill, H.R. 11128, which passed the House of
Representatives several weeks ago.

The Steiger Bill would partition between the Hopi and Navajo Indian
Tribes more than 1.8 million acres of land on the Indian Reservations in
northeast Arizona. This bitter dispute has raged between our two Tribes for
more than 120 years and we believe that justice for both Tribes can only
be achieved by dividing the land equally between us. It must be noted that
the Steiger Bill divides surface rights only. The subsurface rights will

(More)

continue to be held jointly by the two Tribes. This is only reasonable as no one knows with any certainty what lies under the surface.

We realize that this Congress is coming to a close and the Steiger Bill might be an easy thing to put aside in the last minute rush. There is nothing the Navajos would like to see happen more than that. As a matter of fact, they have had as many as 80 people back here at times continuing their strategy of delay and confuse, hoping that Congressional time would run out and hearings would not be held.

But, we Hopi are a trusting people and we trust that the Senate of the United States will realize that there are only 6,000 of us Hopis surrounded by more than 130,000 Navajos and that we cannot begin to compete with them in spending money on lobbying efforts or in political power.

But, we also trust that the United States Senate will realize that we, as a minority within a minority, have a right, at least, to have our case heard.

And, furthermore, once the hearings on the Steiger Bill are held in the Senate, and all the facts are laid out in plain view, we trust in the judgment of those men who the people of the United States have chosen to represent them in the United States Senate.

All we ask is a hearing!

We challenge the Navajos to stop their lobbying on the streets of Washington and in the corridors of Congress and to plead their case on its merits before the United States Senate. Why are they so afraid of the light of a hearing room? Because they are afraid of the facts!

(More)

We have gazed out from our mesas in Arizona for more than a century and watched the Navajo grab more and more of our land. Time has not worked in our favor. We are confident that the members of the United States Senate will not let time run out on us now and that hearings will be held on the Steiger Bill this session.