

Havasupais Tribe's Bid for Return of Land Delayed

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After receiving seemingly massive support from the Congress and the Nixon administration, the proposal to restore in excess of 250,000 acres of land in trust to the Havasupai Tribe of Arizona's Grand Canyon now faces prospects of further delays in the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee before the legislation may come to a vote on the floor of the House.

Legislation to restore land to the Havasupais, whose land holding have dwindled to a remaining 500 acres on the bottom of the Grand Canyon because of en-

croachment on tribal lands by private interests and because of congressional action creating the national park, was first introduced in Congress by Sen. Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., in 1973 as one provision of the Grand Canyon National Enlargement Bill.

The Goldwater bill passed the Senate in September of 1973 and called for a comprehensive joint study by the Departments of Interior and Agriculture to provide recommendations to the Congress on how much land would be required to satisfy the cultural and economic needs of

the Havasupai tribe.

When the legislation came under consideration of the House Indian Affairs Subcommittee, the bill was amended to provide only usage rights for the Havasupai on 100,000 acres of land at the canyon's bottom.

Tribal representatives described this proposal as a "major setback" and again appealed to Congress and the Nixon administration for a better understanding of the necessity for the return of sufficient lands to allow the tribe to become economically viable as well as for land restorations to which the Havasupai have historic and religious claims.

Major opposition to the Havasupai restoration effort was concentrated within two federal agencies. The National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service expressed extreme reluctance to support any proposals for the return of lands currently under their jurisdiction to Indian tribes.

Although the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club adopted a resolution last Jan. 26 which recognized "the need of the Havasupai Indians for a larger land base" and supported the restoration of lands "from any source," formidable opposition from conservationist elements was focused against restoration.

Beginning this April, public support for the Havasupai grew as a number of prominent national newspapers published editorials concerning the land problem and as TV network news programs featured the issue.

Support in Congress also swelled and on May 3 President Nixon announced in Phoenix that legislation to restore up to 251,000 acres of land to the tribe would receive the endorsement of his administration.

After May 3, informed sources on Capitol Hill told AIPA that the NPS was acting in "inappropriate ways" to undermine the Nixon proposition.

An NPS memo which was leaked to the Congress indicated that NPS officials were fearful that other tribes with legitimate interests in lands under NPS jur-

isdiction would bring "a whole shopping list" to Congress for seeking further restorations if the Havasupai legislation were enacted.

Congressional sources also told AIPA that although a strong majority of House Interior Committee members was in favor of returning Havasupai lands, a hard core of committee members and staff aides were determined to delay or halt consideration of legislation which proposed restoration.

On June 20, a spokesman for Rep. Sam Steiger, R-Ariz., told AIPA that Steiger and Rep. Morris Udall, D-Ariz., would offer amendments to the Grand Canyon enlargement bill during the House Interior Committee meeting on June 26 to provide a total of approximately 253,000 acres of land in trust for the Havasupai.

Since 3,000 acres of land are currently held in trust for the tribe, this figure represents a net addition of 250,000 acres to the Havasupai Reservation.

The additions proposed by the two Arizona congressmen include 14,000 acres of land in an area known as Pasture Wash. This area was taken away from the Havasupai by congressional action in 1917. According to the legislation, however, the tribe would relinquish its present use and occupancy of 26,000 acres along the Colorado River.

Havasupai representatives have indicated that they are satisfied with the proposed amendments and that this legislation would provide the return of sufficient acreage to meet their needs. The restoration amendment has received the support of the Nixon administration and the calculation of acreage involved is based upon figures provided by the National Park Service.

A Havasupai spokesman indicated that the tribe was "very pleased" with the substance of the Steiger and Udall amendments and the apparent willingness of the House Interior Committee to deal with the tribe's severe land problems. Plans were made for a delegation of four

Havasupai representatives to be here during the committee's historic decision.

On June 21, however, at least one key member of the House Committee has decided to prevent the Havasupai restoration proposal from being raised during the June 26 House meeting, according to committee sources.

These same sources said that that Rep. Roy Taylor, D-N.C., would object to the Havasupai question being raised during the meeting although the enlargement bill was the first item on the bill of resolved committee business.

When contacted by AIPA for comment, a Havasupai spokesman admitted that the restoration proposal had hit a snag in the committee but refused to confirm that Taylor was the source of opposition. Havasupai attorney Joseph Sparks said:

"We are very disappointed that the bill won't be heard on Wednesday (June 26). We had understood until late Thursday afternoon (June 20) that the bill would be placed on the agenda for the committee meeting. We would like that bill to be considered on its merits."

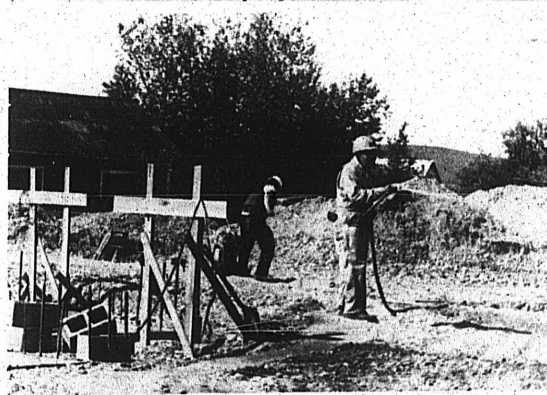
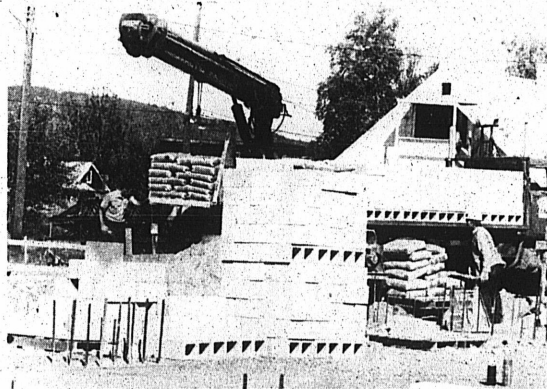
Rep. Taylor declined to comment on amendments proposed for the return of Havasupai land, but one spokesman said that reports that Taylor would object to the Steiger and Udall amendments "were probably overstated."

He indicated that Taylor hoped "to be in a position in a week or two" to consent to have the matter brought before the committee.

"He is trying to meet with everybody (the tribe, National Park Service and conservationists) to get an agreeable bill," added the spokesman.

The spokesman noted that Taylor is aware of the administration position in support of the Havasupai, but also indicated that Taylor felt further compromise was needed between the tribe and the NPS, among others, before the committee could consider the legislation.

Taylor is chairman of the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation.



THE NEW BUILDING FOR DOYON, LIMITED is going up on the corners of First and Hall Streets in downtown Fairbanks. With the completion date set for Dec. 31, 1974. The architect is Roger Cotting of Fairbanks. Construction workers are rushing to get as much done as possible during the more favorable summer construction period.

PHOTOS BY Margie Bauman