# AID AND THE INDIAN: A CASE STUDY IN FAULTY COMMUNICATION[1]

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In 1868, upon release from four years of federal imprisonment, 8,000 surviving Navajos were issued 15,000 sheep which were to serve as the foundation of a native sheep industry. This was part of the government's rehabilitation program for the Navajo Tribe. The United States wanted to make the tribe self-sufficient and economically stable as soon as possible.[2] It wanted to relieve itself of the burden of administration, and, in a manner of speaking, get out of the "Indian business." The resulting phenomenal increase in both livestock and Indian populations prevented this wish from materializing. By the 1920's, the livestock load of the tribal range was far beyond its carrying capacity, and the Indian population was far beyond its capacity to take care of itself. The Government was desperately "up to its ears" in the Indian problem. A further source of confusion in Navajo-Government relations originated from the fact that the Indian Service failed to perceive adequately the nature and strength of the native cultural patterns.

Man, as a product of a multi-dimensional environment, exhibits behavior that in many ways is exceedingly complicated to predict on an intercultural basis, particularly when the patterns of response are not well known. Not only must one know something of the dimensions—the geographical, cultural, social, internal, the so-called "private worlds" of individuals, etc.—but most importantly, "the uniquely combined interplay," as Frank calls it, of living in the different environments.[3] Under these circumstances, it is not difficult to understand the lack of adequate communication that existed between the tribe and the government.

The Navajo livestock reduction program of the 1930's and 40's demonstrates the critical importance of cultural differences in the interpretation of a resource. Like the modern world, the Indian Service concept is objective and looks upon nature from a relatively superior vantage point, seeking to discover new ways to extract and use nature to serve man. Nature is viewed from without rather than from within.

*Traditional* Navajo, as in many tribal-oriented societies, tend to view natural resources as a mergence between man and nature; man attempts to maintain an equilibrium or harmony within the natural world.[4] The idea of extracting or using nature to serve man is contrary to their subjective view. Nature to them is viewed from within rather than from without. This paper will attempt to review and analyze the nature of the unhappy re-

[1] Field research for this study was supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation.

[2] L. Schuyler Fornaroff, "Conservation and Stock Reduction on the Navajo Tribal Range," *Geographical Review,* Vol. LIII, No. 2, April 1963, pp. 200-223.

[3] L. K. Frank, *Nature and Human Nature,* Rutgers University Press, 1951.

[4] See Robert Redfield, "Primitive World View," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society,* Vol. 90, 1956, pp. 30-36.

lationship betwen the Navajo people and the government from the point of view of inter-cultural communication.

## The Indian Service and Its Relations to the Sheep Industry

There have been several administrative changes in the Indian Service work on the Navajo. Prior to 1934 there were six separate agencies on the reservation through which the Bureau of Indian Affairs dispensed its services. Rather than serving to unify the basically unorganized tribal structure, these administrative areas actually served to reinforce local unity, and Indians living in one agency felt no *esprit de corps* with those in any of the other five agencies. Each agency conducted its own activities in the areas of natural resources development, engineering, health, education, welfare, law and order, and administration (which in off-reservation American communities are rendered by local, county, state, federal or private agencies).

In 1934, the six agencies were united under a central office at Window Rock, Arizona. In 1937, 18 land management districts were established and a supervisor was appointed to each area. These district supervisors, working at the local level, were under the direction of the general superintendent at Window Rock. Among his other duties, the local supervisor worked on problems of range and livestock management.

Today, the central agency office for the Navajo is still located at Window Rock, and sub-agencies are scattered over the reservation. Each sub-agency has appointed range men to work at the local level, although there is no longer a separate district supervisor responsible for only one district.

Each of these administrative changes resulted in fear, misapprehension, and hostility in the Navajo. They could not understand the need to change systems, despite the relatively long periods between administrative changes. When the most recent system was organized they objected to the government's withdrawal of men working directly with the people (district supervisors), being fearful that there would be lack of contact and understanding of the local situation when a sub-agency was established. Furthermore, the shift back to a situation which the Indian Service had formerly used and then discarded as unsatisfactory caused confusion in most Navajo minds.

It was apparent that one core difficulty in the Navajo Service has always been the local worker's inability to implement in the field those plans formulated for him by administrators in their offices. The local field man has indeed been given training in "what to do" and "why to do it," but the problem of "how to do it" was somehow forgotten.

## Personnel Problems

A major problem concerned the frequent turnover in range conservation personnel, which resulted in confusion and suspicion in the Navajo. Varying approaches to land management brought to the local level by personnel trained in different colleges, and the shifting techniques tried by the Indian Service to better manage the soil, caused the uneducated Navajo "to wonder whether we knew what we were doing," as one range man said. Personnel change seemed to cause more confusion for the Navajo than

program change. "They get used to a certain employee, maybe they even get to like him, then a new one comes in, and they become suspicious—especially if he brings in a new technique. . . ."

One of the subtleties involved in the antagonisms between the Navajo and the field worker of the thirties pertained to the youth of the technicians sent to work with the Indians. These young, energetic college graduates, many from the East and unfamiliar with the Western range, seemed insensitive and uninterested in the human needs of the people and more concerned with the status of the soil. The Navajo regard for age and experience made them feel that their existence was in the hands of men who had not yet lived.

Concurrently, the field men seemed thwarted by administrative procedures and were often torn between what they felt the human needs actually were and what they were being asked to do. The "gag rule" stated in a letter by Secretary Ickes (1934)[5] illustrates the problem faced by field personnel:

> If any employee wishes to oppose the new policy (IRA)[6] he should do so honestly and openly from outside the service. This would mean his resignation. Any other course is unscrupulous and is detrimental to the Indians because it acts on the service as a canker. This condition has existed in the ranks for many years and has been partly responsible for the failures of the past. It retards and defeats the most conscientious effort toward good administration, and it will be summarily eliminated, whenever found, by dismissal.

The stumbling blocks confronting range men undoubtedly caused personal frustration and concern about the desirability of devoting a career to the reservation. The chronic lack of long-term personnel persists today.

The local range man has two phases to his on-the-job training. He must adapt his basic knowledge and training to the over-all reservation program, and he must then re-adjust this program to suit the local people and the ecological problems in the section of the reservation to which he has been assigned. Most of the administrators have come to recognize the important fact that areal, cultural and even physical differences exist among Navajo throughout the reservation. Likewise, some local range men have been able to recognize not only the extreme individualism of these Indians, but also the general distrust that persists among individual Navajo.

In the writer's impression, the local field man might be described as a sincere and hard-headed type whose first obligation is to the land. Also, he is often a person who is conscientious in trying to make change easier for the Indians if he can. The administrators themselves recognize that in reality, over the years, most men have been either over-sympathetic to the Indians or have over-emphasized the rules with little consideration of the human factors involved. Today, all agree that a balance between these extremes is the ideal combination. The Service, in trying to build toward this

[5] H. Ickes, "Letter to Indian Service Employees," Department of the Interior, April 30, 1934.

[6] Indian Reorganization Act: Legislation enacted to terminate the General Allotment Act of 1887. The IRA was formulated to help orient the Indian toward American ideas. It aimed to effect certain changes in native society while preserving native customs as much as possible.

ideal, has recently begun orientation programs to train personnel for awareness of the problems of communication, local conditions, and Navajo attitudes and behavior *before* they go into the field.

The difficulty in these indoctrinations is that while the ways of Navajo life are described, the average field man does not come away with ideas about how to use this "interesting information" to implement his range program. He comes away with valid suggestions and perspective such as Thompson provides:[7]

> The administrator must decide whether to foster and build on the Indian world-view . . . or to try to teach soil and range conservation, on one hand, and to inculcate exploitative American attitudes, on the other. But if he decides to foster Indian attitudes toward nature he should realize that a consistent program is necessary, including among other items, careful selection and re-education of Indian Service personnel and their creative application to the problem. If he does not so decide, he should realize that these basic attitudes will persist in some form regardless, and he will be ignoring a golden opportunity to relate and guide basic indigenous orientations to urgent modern problems and to bridge the gap between the traditional Indian world-view and emergent world views.

### Perception of Another "World View"

One becomes aware of the differences in world view when trying to instill motivations for action. Frequent criticisms by administrators refer to the inability of invoking a "sense of responsibility" in the Indians. A typical Service complaint is that the government has "spoon-fed" the Indians, that "they've gotten too much for free." One field man complained that:

> ". . . subsidies to individual owners have been detrimental. If they'd had to make a go of it . . . with their own expenses, they might take better care of their land and not over-stock . . . They might be able to make a living then. . . "

"Making a living," of course, has totally different meanings to the Navajo and the range men. Some "progressives" seem to share goals and values of their government administrators. The average range Indian, however, is expected to take care of himself and his immediate family, "to be rich, but not too rich," or be "poor, but not too poor."[8] He has no goal to be a "success" as the white man defines this term, and he is unstimulated by the rewards of future gains which the Indian Service describes as the result of proper management techniques. To be successful in traditional Navajo terms does not always imply *material* wealth. The man who does not have much stock, land, or jewelry may still be considered successful if he possesses knowledge of the "old ways" and "owns" songs and knows ceremonies. This is "valid property" to a Navajo.

The range man who has lived and trained in a society geared to action finds progress among Indians to be painfully slow. He considers the Indian's rate of change of attitude toward livestock care to be slight and ". . . so slow that's very discouraging."

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[7] Laura Thompson, "Attitudes and Acculturation," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 50, No. 2, 1948, p. 213.

[8] R. Hobson, *Navajo Acquisitive Values*, Peabody Museum of Havard University, Papers, Vol. XLII, No. 3, 1954.

Most of the workers among the Navajo today believe the basic attitudes about livestock are still much in evidence, especially among the older people. The generation born in the early 1930's or shortly before still maintain a feeling for the land and the flocks. The younger generation, particularly those living near non-Indian areas and exposed to off-reservation opportunities, are not as keenly interested in living off the land and flocks.

One cannot deny that the economic significance of sheep is changing over the years. But the indications are that the social value of the animal remains the same, especially among the older people.[9]

The young Navajo is in a precarious position. He has been brought up in the traditional ways of his people and has also been educated in the ways of the outside world. Especially if he has lived near or in off-reservation areas, he is often bewildered as he straddles both worlds. In actuality, he is no longer a "Navajo" in the *traditional* sense; nor is he yet psychologically integrated in the American community.

The Indian Service refers to this group as the "progressives," and attempts to work through them to effect management changes. It is essentially a small, and, to date, a relatively ineffective group. Administrators indicate that when the progressive element gains enough seats in the Tribal Council the period of effective innovation will begin. To date the "progress" itself is noticeable only in very elementary management techniques. Some Navajo have requested aid, but merely to keep livestock alive, not in learning proper herding and range management techniques.

It is still confusing to the Indians when the range man recommends a shift from an already accepted technique to a newer or better system. For example, the Navajo have been accustomed to dipping their stock as a disease control measure. A few years back, a dusting method was recommended as being better and less expensive. The reaction of most Navajo was, "You've been telling us to dip for years, and you want us to change to something else now." Only a few of the more "progressives" would dust.

Here we have another example of the kind of change which baffled the Indian. The Navajo make frequent reference to the reversals in Indian Service procedures. First, the Indian said, he is told to "increase" flocks. Then, he complained, "They're turning around and telling us to cut them down . . ." Boyle and Hadley[10] refer to this "about face policy," the "pendulum" of the Indian Service, as a source of confusion. Many Navajo believe if they wait long enough the pendulum will swing in their favor, relieving them of the necessity to act.

These people cannot easily comprehend how figures in authority can display this fluctuation in procedure. To them a law is a law and weakness is displayed in shifting emphasis.

The traditional Indian himself is slow to change (though he respects knowledge and the ability to learn). However, he is unable to grasp the white man's rationalizations and preferences for continual change. The

[9] L. Schuyler Fornaroff, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

[10] R. Boyle and J. Hadley, "Problems of Range Management on the Navajo Reservation." Recorded radio broadcast, November 23, 1938.

Navajo regard change as weakness; hence in some ways they regard the Indian Service as weak rather than strong.[11]

They also regard the Indian Service as the modern counterpart of the Holy People.[12] Like these divinities, the Indian Service is supposedly able to settle those troubles the Navajo cannot solve. The Holy People—and the Indian Service—must be treated with caution so as not to arouse antagonism. However, the Holy People—and, thus, the Indian Service—are not morally sanctified and to some extent are governed by the same laws of behavior as "Earth Surface People" (human beings). They may be either helpful or dangerous, and only in proper circumstances does the Navajo layman know about their nature and powers.

Thompson states that the Navajo attitudes toward power figures have become "coercive" and one of restraint.[13] Ladd has suggested that although avowed, under special circumstances ". . . the Holy People are not relevant to moral discourse." In other words, when dealing directly with the Holy People—and *vis a vis* with the Indian Service—the Navajo layman would do as told and look to the supernatural to help solve problems. However, once the direct dealings were discontinued, he may or may not continue to carry out the plans set by the supernatural.

For example, in an attempt to bring stock programs to the local level, the Indian Service during the reduction era established chapter meeting houses in the land management districts. The Navajo attended meetings as long as the Indian Service either required it or assisted in the conduct of the meetings. When the pressure was removed and attendance and conduct of meetings were left to the Navajo, the chapter system fell apart. There was almost total lack of interest and support. It has already been noted that in relationship with people outside the family or residence-group structures, Navajo rules are loose regarding behavior. It may be assumed then that with this lack of prescribed behavior toward outsiders, and the lack of prescribed ways of dealing with Holy People except under "proper circumstances," the Navajo have no clear set of rules for dealing with the Indian Service. What results is a *tentative* acceptance for certain plans laid by the government until pressure for participation is released, at which time the Navajo discontinue (as illustrated by the chapter system). This withdrawal is one customary way in which Navajo deal with excessive pressure over which they have no control.

The Indian Service assumes that it had adequate technological know-how to cope with the overgrazed land, and management techniques that would eventually improve the range. The problem was, and still is, how to get the Indian to accept the programs which will achieve these results.

Many Navajo obsessively reject being told how to manage or dispose of their property. This basic cultural value was, no doubt, violated by many

[11] E. Fryer, "Why the Government is Trying the Navajo Grazing Cases in the Federal Courts," Manuscript Document, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C., n.d.

[12] Holy People are divinities, distinguished from ordinary beings in that they possess special supernatural powers and are immortal. The Indian Service may also appear "Immortal" to the Navajo, for though individuals within the Service continually change, the Service plans go on and on. See, Laura Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205; J. Ladd, *Structure of a Moral Code*, Harvard University Press, 1957, pp. 218-219.

[13] Laura Thompson, *op. cit.*

educational methods used in trying to make the Indian aware of the seriousness of the range problem. This "impertinence" on the part of the extension services may have been an important factor in the failure to motivate the tribe.

### THE RELOCATION AND EDUCATION DILEMMA

For several years, education and relocation have been considered as solutions to the overgrazing problem. Administrators have long believed that progress would be achieved through the young "progressives" who would be able to grasp the necessary concepts and, unlike their elders, are not as psychologically fated to livestock pursuits.

Off-reservation efforts through the 1950's have involved an infinitesimal portion of the population, and even this has been masked by a tremendous birth rate and reduced infant mortality. Off-reservation seasonal wage work, however, appears to be a recent trend. The families remain at home and tend the flocks and land.

In fulfillment of the treaty obligations of 1868, the Government is beginning to provide adequate school facilities. The Navajo are currently enthusiastic about education, and Government records presently show most school-age children registered in school. Attendance problems, however, are rampant. During reduction days, more than half of the school-age Navajo tended the family flocks. Today, it is still necessary to "beat the bushes" to get regular attendance, particularly in the conservative "long hair" areas. Therefore, despite the trend for education, the influence of the elders and their traditions remains greater upon the child than the influence of the teacher and his education. Even the young "progressives" reportedly still use the medicine man.

Yet there is no doubt among officials that the younger generation is becoming more interested in "making a living" and in receiving certain benefits of what we call essentials and what the Navajo would call conveniences (i.e., electricity, water, bathrooms). What worries the Indian Service is that the people do not benefit from the more educated Navajo, since many do not return to "hogan living" and a way of life which adapts Western learning to Navajo tradition. The educated Navajo may return to the reservation to work for the Indian Service or the Tribal Council, but he is now either a westernized Navajo or a man trying to straddle two cultures—a psychologically hazardous venture.

The American attitude of education as a virtue in itself that will solve all Indian problems has been a built-in characteristic of Indian Service planning. Tax[14] recently contrasted the desire for Indian education from the points of view of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indians:

> . . . Indians all want the best education possible for their children. Some people think this means that Indians have finally given up and want to become like white men. My own interpretation is that just as you once learned to shoot back with the rifle, now you know that you can shoot back with education and educated leadership. You want to defend your Indianness with education. The only differences between yours and the policy of Mr. Emmons [Commissioner] is if he thinks he is giving you education in order to end your Indianness.

[14] Sol Tax, Talk before 1957 Meeting of National Congress of American Indians.

## The Tribal Council

The Tribal Council, and the Navajo Police Force, are organizations that to traditional Navajo are irrationally conceived. There are no comparable authoritarian counterparts within the institutionalized framework of the native culture. Normal processes of social control were partially displaced or upset by these innovations.

By no stretch of the imagination could the Council be described as "the voice of the people."[15] At best, it serves to assure the Indian Service that issues discussed at Council meetings would also be discussed in the hogans. "The people themselves," as Kluckhohn noted, "are the real authority."[16]

It is clear the basic problem in the history of tribal government rests with the fact that the government operated on the assumption that they were dealing with "a tribe" that could be approached through a governing body that represented the people. This superimposed structure had essentially failed. It failed because the Navajo had never traditionally functioned in a unified manner with an authoritarian figure or group of figures serving as leader. Futhermore, the most ideal behavior to a Navajo is to conform thoroughly to the norm. Any deviation, such as holding office of authority, would be subject to suspicion.

Headmen and tribal elders may be loosely termed as leaders, but neither they nor rich men (who may be powerful through economic pressure) are vested with authority of formal leadership.[17]

This was evident even before the imprisonment in the 1860's. Peace treaties made with particular bands were held by the War Department as representative of the "Navajo Tribe," and the Government could not understand why other bands continued their raiding when "the Tribe" had signed a treaty. Likewise, the establishment of management districts, rather than unifying the tribe, seems to have reinforced the basic separatist tendencies. People eventually came to identify themselves with the area in which they lived. The result is something like an artificial reservation within a reservation.

The government continued attempts to work through supposed "chiefs" with little success. In an effort to have a group to speak, in any fashion, for the tribe, the Indian Service formed a body which led to the creation of the Navajo Council in 1923.

> The council as organized in 1923 was incompletely representative. Members were elected at gatherings of people at a few centers on the reservation. The people in the back areas and from the mountains could not get in, so the delegates were chosen from the agency areas.[18]

Further endeavors to procure tribal leadership led to the 1925 development of the chapter system, based on local areas and organized with a body of officers to operate in a formal parliamentary fashion. The Navajo found this meaningless, despite the fact that the government built chapter houses

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[15] See Clyde Kluckhohn, and Dorothea Leighton, *The Navaho,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1946, p. 102, for summary of the establishment of powers of the new council.

[16] *Ibid,* p. 9.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] John Collier, untitled document, Navaho File, U.S. National Archives. n.d.

and expended considerable time and money on the system. One chief error seems to have been in the government's insistence that the "headmen" adhere to government programs or lose their leadership.[19] This resulted in strong anti-government feelings to the point where the government withdrew its support, whereupon most of the chapters disintegrated. The psychological implications of "withdrawal" previously noted are relevant here.

The naiveté of the administration in believing that the organization of a council would solve the problem of tribal representation and communication between the Service and the tribe was apparent to some officials in the Service. One noted:

> It is essentially a company union, deriving its shady power not from the Navajo people but from the government. It is a House of Lords, inevitably opposing a redistribution of what are in effect the landed property rights of the class it represents. It might conceivably go so far as to sabotage the new localized method of reduction . . . the present Council could be kept alive by artificial nourishment in the form of non-controversial meetings; to be replaced at the proper time with a council based on functional representation of grouped land management districts.[20]

It is apparent that the criticism of the Council as an extension of the Indian Service existed both in the minds of the Indian Service and the Indians. An attempt to sever this association was made in the organization of the Council in 1938, which aimed to solve the problem of inadequate representation. The suggestion of "a council based on functional representation of grouped land management districts" was incorporated as the means to elect 74 delegates to compose the Tribal Council. Despite its rejection of the Indian Reorganization Act, the tribe was informed that a new council was to be established with membership elected by popular vote. Subsequent provisions under the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act provided for adoption of a suitable constitution and by-laws.

### Difficulties of Adequate Representation

In order to implement government programs effectively, the Indian Service, in the absence of powerful native leadership figures, picked those whom they thought were the wealthy and most influential Indians to comprise the first Tribal Council. Later, the Navajo themselves selected the "best talkers" for office.

Adams, in his study of the Shonto village trading post, claimed that the councilman's function, as he and the community see it, is not to represent Shonto at the seat of the government, but to represent the government at Shonto.[21]

The selection of councilmen who are wealthy or who are good talkers about government programs may be somewhat objectionable to the Navajo. To be wealthy is a basic goal of every Navajo, but only to a degree. Too much wealth is looked upon unfavorably and breeds distrust and suspicion. The Navajo who would foster a government-sponsored program which was

[19] Kluckhohn and Leighton, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[20] Unsigned letter to Commissioner Collier, January 6, 1936, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[21] William Y. Adams, *Shonto; A Study of the Role of the Trader in a Modern Navajo Community,* unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Arizona, 1958.

unpopular among the people would fall into disfavor in the native community. During reduction days, Fryer wrote:

> Now they will follow only those leaders who tell them things they like to hear only while they are saying things they like to hear.[22]

The tribal government machinery has grown over the years, although its basic problem of adequate leadership remains. Since the war, however, according to Young, great strides have been taken toward the development of a concept of tribal unity and greater responsibilities in social and economic rehabilitation.[23]

In 1954, the responsibility for election procedures was transferred from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the tribe. The current trend to transfer more federal responsibilities to the Indians themselves finds the interests of the Navajo Council continually expanding. In 1958, its budget exceeded $15,000,000 and covered such areas as health, education, welfare, law and order, relocation, and natural resource development.

## The Grazing Regulations Problem Persists

The first set of special grazing regulations went into effect on June 2, 1937. Until the final version was adopted by the Council on April 25, 1956, a series of complicated revisions were deliberated between Washington officials, local field men and the Navajo Council. A series of supplements to the approved regulations are now periodically issued.

The regulations prescribe the establishment of grazing committees, their duties and responsibilities; functions of the land management districts; carrying capacities; methods of keeping accurate records of permits and ownerships; handling of grazing rights and permits; establishment of grazing fees; rules of trespass; movement of livestock; fencing rules; and construction near permanent livestock water developments.

Enforcement and interpretation of the grazing regulations is the charge of the Grazing Committee. The regulations, however, pose difficult enforcement problems, and the Council has been working through the "progressives" to aid in interpreting proper range management procedures. Extension workers and other Indian Service personnel also attempt to review and interpret procedures with the people by using the tribal regulations as a guide. But as one extension worker reported: "All you have to do is to show up with the Blue Book[24] in your hand and you've already lost the battle."

During 1941, there were unusually moist conditions, and the Council requested reduction through issuance of special temporary permits. These were issued with instructions that there must be reduction of stock to the total permitted numbers, as per regular and special issued permits. However, for the most part, sales in 1941 were not above par and compliance with the Council ordinance was only "probably accomplished in a few cases." The progress report emphasizes:

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[22] E. Fryer, *op. cit.*

[23] Robert Young, *Navajo Yearbook,* Window Rock, 1958, p. 195.

[24] The "Blue Book" is the official "Navajo Reservation Grazing Handbook based on the Navajo Grazing Regulations, approved by the Secretary of the Interior, April 25, 1956," published by the Navajo Tribal Council, Window Rock, Arizona, January, 1958.

. . . that the special temporary permits were issued, on request of the Council, and with the Commissioner's approval, for a period of *one year* and were designated to *slow up* the process of bringing Navajo livestock down to the carrying capacity of the range . . . [25]

Since there was no set time-limit to the original permits, the Indians considered permit privileges to exist in perpetuity. Thus when land became over-used and it was obvious that stock should be moved or reduced on the spot, the Indian claimed *his* permit to graze *here* and felt he had nowhere else he could go because *other* permits covered *other* grazing areas. And in actuality, there was and is no unused grazing land. In order to preserve the carrying capacity, permits are negotiable only *within* the land management district and not between districts. Traveling and motion, psychological leitmotifs of Navajo life were drastically curtailed by district regulations, and according to a young Navajo, " . . . it made one feel like it's a prison."

In reality, the Grazing Committees have operated as administrative extensions of the Tribal Council and the Indian Service. They were effective in such areas as negotiating permits and settling simple land-use squabbles. They are less successful in training their constituents to improve grazing methods. In conjunction with the Extension Service, they use a variety of visual aid materials and other adult education means at their disposal. Although they avail themselves of the facilities, the Navajo do not seem to carry over the committee meeting information to action in their fields. These committees are expected to represent and deal with the local population, but one still hears the oft-repeated complaint of the local field man:

. . . lack of real tribal leaders is at the core of the problem and . . . local conditions will be difficult to change without the influence of local leadership. . .

On various occasions the tribe has stated intentions to conduct range surveys to determine the livestock ownership patterns, but reasons had always been found not to do so.

## Tribal Council Continues to Assume Greater Responsibility

In compliance with the trend of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to transfer more responsibility for tribal affairs to the tribal governing body, the Council assumed responsibility for resources care and development in 1960 when it organized a Tribal Resources Division. The Indian Service now acts in a purely advisory capacity to the Council regarding tribal stock programs; the Service cannot enforce tribal livestock programs enforcement can only be issued by the Secretary of the Interior. . . . The Tribal Council has authority to accept and enforce all types of programs; however, the passage of rules referring to livestock programs appears to be taboo. Feelings shun enforcements which in any way suggest "adjustments in numbers."

Politics play a large role in the Council. Salaries for tribal councilmen are high, and some representatives are hesitant to act in areas of sensitivity for fear of losing their tribal seat and its benefits.

Today's Council (1960) is described by Indian Service men as being predominantly composed of "long-hairs," who are fearful of a return to a reduction era—to the point where they will react in the manner described

[25] *Progress of Navajo Range Problems.* U.S. Department of Interior Report, n.d.

by some as "do nothingness." Ironically, this may involve action, but action which circumvents the core issue of livestock adjustment.

An example of such Council action, colored by fear of implications of reduction, is found in the feed-grain program of the mid-1950's. This council-sponsored program came into existence as a result of severe drought and the necessity to provide reservation stock with ample feed to prevent starvation. Federal aid was offered and the tribe purchased feed-grain (amounting to $512,000 of tribal funds) for distribution to livestock owners. Government advice on distribution techniques was sought, and the Service recommended supplying feed *only to good breeding stock* rather than providing it on a blanket reservation-wide basis. They were accused of supporting a reduction policy. The Council insisted that *all* stock be fed. What could have been an ideal means of culling old and unproductive stock, thus resulted in an eventual increase in numbers on a reservation-wide basis.

The hope for the future, according to Indian Service personnel, lies in councilmen who are able to see both sides of the picture. However, the influence of the elders on the more educated young man frequently prevents him from sponsoring those programs and activities which he might intellectually comprehend as being beneficial. Hence the grazing problem persists, and the Indian Service range ecologists are still operationally handicapped with many of the cultural problems which blocked conservation programs during reduction days.