

# Navajo Dike Dynamiting Brings Federal Explosives Charge Against Local Men

Charles H. Esplin of Cedar City and Eliel Winter of Springdale were arrested Saturday by FBI Agents and Sheriffs S. C. Lamb of Iron County and Antone Prince of Washington County. According to Jay C. Newman, Special Agent in charge of the FBI, Salt Lake City, office, the arrests were made in connection with the dynamiting of the Navajo Lake Dike on May 25th.

Esplin operates a ranch at North Fork, below Navajo Lake, and resides in Cedar City. Winter, 45 has been employed by Esplin as a ranch hand.

A federal Complaint was filed at Salt Lake City before United States Commissioner Edward M. Garnett Saturday charging both men with violating the Federal Explosives Act. They were held in the Washington county jail until Monday when they were removed to Salt Lake City by Deputy United States Marshall George Baker for arraignment.

Esplin, according to Newman, admitted dynamiting the dam, stating that the dam deprived him of water rights as it did not permit the water to go into the sink holes at the lower end of the lake, which contributed a source of supply at his ranch. Winter admitted having assisted in dynamiting, Newman said.

The dirt filled, rock faced dam with Federal Funds, local contributions and C. C. labor. It was built for the purpose of storing water in the upper part of the lake in order to maintain a water level high enough to protect the fish in the lake during dry seasons. Considerable controversy had developed over water rights involved, but no definite proof had ever been given as to where the water from the lake went to after draining into the sinks. The State Fish & Game Commission made application for water enough to maintain the lake at the level of the spillway in the dike, and it had been assumed that this protected the state and governments interests in the project.

An attempt was made several years ago to dynamite the dike, but who ever made the attempt was apparently frightened away before the job could be completed. Holes had been drilled and the dynamite was found at the site.

Considerable damage was done to the dike this time, and it has not been determined as yet whether or not the dike will be repaired.