

3-10-1840

Memorial of the Legislature of Mississippi, praying the payment to that state of the value of the sixteenth sections in the Chickasaw cession, and a donation of the unappropriated lands in that state, for purposes of internal improvement

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Recommended Citation

S. Doc. No. 268, 26th Cong., 1st Sess. (1840)

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MEMORIAL

OF

THE LEGISLATURE OF MISSISSIPPI,

PRAYING

The payment to that State of the value of the sixteenth sections in the Chickasaw cession, and a donation of the unappropriated lands in that State, for purposes of internal improvement.

MARCH 10, 1840.

Referred to the Committee on Public Lands, and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled :

The memorial of the Legislature of the State of Mississippi respectfully sheweth to your honorable body :

That, by the late treaty with the Chickasaw nation of Indians, a portion of this State is deprived of the means of common school education, by the sale of the sixteenth sections for the benefit of said Indians ; and, inasmuch as there are no lands within the State that have heretofore been offered at public sale, and remain unsold, that are of value equivalent to those that have been sold for the benefit of said Indians, we, your memorialists, respectfully urge upon your honorable body the just demands of this State upon the Federal Government, and ask that a law be passed appropriating to the State of Mississippi a sum equal in value to the said sixteenth sections in said Chickasaw cession ; and, that the value of said sections may be ascertained, we suggest the propriety of appointing commissioners of valuation, to proceed forthwith to estimate the cash value of each of said sixteenth sections, and report the same to the next session of Congress ; or adopt some such mode in your wisdom as shall award to Mississippi that which is justly her due, and of which she is now deprived, to the prejudice of the great and paramount interests of education.

Your memorialists would further show, that the State of Mississippi is engaging in a general system of internal improvement, which has for its ultimate object, not only the improvement of our rivers, but the penetration of the interior of our State by railroads, intending to connect them with like improvements in other States, which, when completed, will not only promote the great interests of agriculture, commerce, and social intercourse between citizens of different States, develop the resources of the interior, and bring them to bear upon individual and national prosperity, but, without changing our State and Federal relations, will form a chain of iron, binding together, by community of interest and social relations and feel-

ings, the sisters of our happy confederacy ; and, as a means of national defence, by the facility which they will afford for the transportation of men and munitions of war to points vulnerable to attack by an enemy, they recommend themselves to the favorable consideration of the patriot and the statesman. These roads, when completed, as is now contemplated, in connexion with those of other States, will connect the Mississippi river at Vicksburg, (and commence in our own State, and at Memphis, in the State of Tennessee,) with Savannah, in the State of Georgia, and Charleston, in the State of South Carolina ; and, by the chain now contemplated through the south, from south to north, or gulf coast, with New Orleans, Natchez and Vicksburg will be connected with the most populous division of Tennessee ; and, indeed, either by the continuation of the line, via Nashville, to Louisville, or by the Tennessee and Ohio rivers, the States of the Ohio valley will be brought into more immediate connexion with our southern border. Your honorable body will, therefore, clearly perceive that these improvements will be of vast importance in a national point of view. We therefore respectfully urge, from these considerations, and by the fact that the Federal Government has made munificent donations of the public domain to other States for purposes of internal improvement, that a law be passed relinquishing to the State of Mississippi all the unappropriated lands of the Government in this State for the purposes of internal improvement ; giving to the State the power to graduate the prices of said lands, that our poor citizens may be afforded the opportunity of obtaining homes at their value, and the speedy settlement of our State be effected.

Your memorialists conceive that the State of Mississippi has high claims upon your liberality, in consideration of the vast amount that has been paid by her citizens into the Treasury for the public lands, until but little of the public domain of our State, except that which is poor and comparatively worthless, remains unsold ; and, while other States have received large and munificent donations, Mississippi has received nothing, and now only asks the poor pittance of what, with few exceptions, may be called the refuse lands of the Government, for the purpose of aiding in a system of improvement, in which the other States of this Union will have as deep an interest, or nearly so, as our own State. Your memorialists, therefore, confidently appeal to the generosity, the magnanimity, and the justice of your honorable body, believing that their request will be granted.

Resolved, That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representatives requested, to use their best exertions to procure the passage of a law to carry into effect the subject mentioned in the foregoing memorial ; and that his excellency the Governor be instructed to forward a copy of the same to our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

J. SPEIGHT,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

GEO. B. AUGUSTUS,

President of the Senate.

Approved, February 20, 1840 :

A. G. McNUTT.