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Petition of the head chiefs of the Chippewa tribe of Indians on Lake Superior for a grant of lands, &c

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CHIPPEWA INDIANS ON LAKE SUPERIOR.

PETITION

OF THE

HEAD CHIEFS OF THE CHIPPEWA TRIBE OF INDIANS ON
LAKE SUPERIOR

FOR

A grant of lands, &c.

FEBRUARY 7, 1849.

Laid upon the table, and ordered to be printed.

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

Your humble petitioners, the undersigned, head chiefs of the Chippewa tribe of Indians, residing on and near the banks of Lake Superior, would respectfully represent, that in obedience to the wishes of their respective bands, and also in obedience to the wishes of the chiefs and people of neighboring bands as expressed in general council, they have come to Washington for the purpose of laying before the authorities of the United States government certain grievances under which they labor, and also to ask from this government certain grants and privileges for the benefit of the bands aforesaid. That in pursuance of the object of their visit, and in fulfilment of their duty as the representatives of their people, they called upon their great father, the President, some days ago, and in a full talk laid before him the grievances complained of, and also made known the wishes of their people in regard to the grant of certain lands, &c. That the principal grievances of which we complain being matters of executive regulation, will, it is presumed, receive immediate attention and be promptly corrected, and we need not therefore trouble Congress with a recapitulation of the same.

That our people, to wit, sixteen bands, desire a donation of twenty-four sections of land, covering the graves of our fathers, our sugar orchards, and our rice lakes and rivers, at seven different places now occupied by us as villages, viz: at View Desert, or Old Garden, three sections; at Trout Lake, four sections; at Lake Coteré, four sections; at La Point, four sections; at Ontonagon, three sections; at La Ance, three sections; and at Pah-po-goh-mony, three sections. That we desire these lands for the purposes specified, and also with the view of permanent cultivation, and as the permanent home of our people, whom we hope, under the gene-

rosity and judicious legislation of Congress, may become an industrious and civilized population, and worthy of the rights of citizenship, the privileges of which we humbly pray may be at once extended to them. The present generation—that is the generation which is now passing away—can scarcely hope to live to realize any of the benefits resulting from so beneficent a policy, but it will make them happy to think that these great advantages of the white man will descend in blessings upon their children. That we foresee clearly the inevitable destiny of the red race, that it is doomed to be swept, at no distant day from the face of the earth; and we wish, if possible, to avert this catastrophe from our immediate bands and families. We do not wish to be driven north of the British line, nor West among the wandering and vicious tribes which infest the plains and mountains stretching from the Mississippi to the Pacific. One or other of these events will be certain to ensue unless our prayer be granted by the great council of this nation. Either would be fatal to us, and we should never cease to regret that our white brothers had dealt so hardly by us.

That we already have good schools among us, and many of our children are being educated in the knowledge of the white man. Would it not be hard to separate us from these advantages, and send our children, partly educated, among the wild tribes of the West where they would lose all they know, and grow up as ignorant and barbarous as those by whom they would there be surrounded?

We would also further represent, that we have come a long way to see our great father and the great council of our white brothers, and to attend to this business for our people at home; that the little money that we started with lasted us but a very short time; that we were obliged to resort to exhibitions for the purpose of defraying our expenses; and that, with all our best efforts to avoid it, we have still gotten into debt. Generous white men, at several villages along the route, lent us money. We wish to pay them. We are now on heavy expenses, and have been ever since we came here, two weeks ago. Our annuities, we are told, cannot be diverted to our benefit; we therefore pray our white brothers of the two great councils to give us six thousand dollars to enable us to pay our debts, and to take us home to our families.

And as in duty bound your petitioners wilt ever pray.

Signed at Washington city this 5th of February, 1849.

Ka she anst, his x mark.

Osh-ka-ba wis, his x mark.

On gua-sug, his x mark.

Nah-gon nob, his x mark.

O gu mah-ge-zic, his x mark.

Wis kok, his x mark.

JOHN B. MARTELL, *Interpreter.*

Witness:

J. M. MORGAN, *of Iowa.*

A true copy of the petition sent to the United States Senate.

J. M. MORGAN, *of Iowa.*