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Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting a draught of a bill to enable Indians to become citizens of the United States

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CITIZENSHIP OF INDIANS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A draught of a bill to enable Indians to become citizens of the United States.

APRIL 24, 1874.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., April 21, 1874.

SIR: With a view to enable individual Indians to avail themselves of the privileges and benefits of citizenship, this Department has caused to be prepared a draught of a bill for the purpose, containing a proviso which confirms to Indians any right that they may have acquired under the homestead or pre-emption laws, on the condition that they have complied with the requirements under which they availed themselves of said homestead and pre-emption privileges.

I have the honor to present said draught of a "Bill to enable Indians to become citizens of the United States," and recommend that it receive the favorable consideration and action of Congress.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. DELANO,
Secretary.

The SPEAKER of the House of Representatives.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., April 20, 1874.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 16th instant, returning office reports of the 1st and 13th instant, respectively, inclosing for submission to Congress a draught of a bill to enable individual Indians to become citizens of the United States, and a proviso thereto.

In accordance with your instructions, I have caused the bill and proviso to be incorporated under one head, with the modification verbally suggested by you in our conversation of the 16th instant, and herewith transmit the same with the recommendation that it be laid before Congress for the consideration and action of that body.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWD. P. SMITH,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

A BILL to enable Indians to become citizens of the United States.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That if any Indian shall desire to become a citizen of the United States, he shall make application to the judge of a court of record, and in open court make the same proof and take the same oath of allegiance as is provided by law for the naturalization of aliens, and shall also make proof to the satisfaction of the court that he has sufficient intelligence and prudence to control his affairs and interests, and that he has adopted the habits of civilized life, and has been for at least one year previously thereto, and is, able to support himself and family, whereupon he shall be declared by said court to be a citizen of the United States, which declaration shall be entered on record and a certificate thereof given to said party, and the provisions of this act are extended to any adult Indian, male or female, who may be able to comply with the requirements hereof, and the wife and minor children of such person or persons, when such adults shall have become citizens of the United States in accordance with the provisions hereof, shall be deemed and held to be citizens of the United States in like manner with the members of the family of any other citizen, native-born or naturalized alien: *Provided,* That nothing in this act shall prevent any Indian or member of his family, who avails himself of the provisions hereof, from continuing to receive any annuity or money of any kind or payment of any kind to which he or they may be entitled as a member of any tribe or band of Indians:

Provided also, That if any Indian shall have heretofore availed himself of the benefits of the homestead or pre-emption privilege, under the authority and rulings of the General Land-Office, such Indian shall be, and hereby is, fully confirmed in his right, title, and interest, in and to the tract of land claimed by him pursuant to such authority or ruling, as fully and completely as if such action had been taken by a citizen of the United States:

Provided, Such Indian shall have complied with the conditions and requirements under which he availed himself of said homestead and pre-emption privilege.