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Report on the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

APRIL 18, 1876.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. BOGY submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 669.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 669) authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to set aside a reservation for the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa Indians, and for other purposes, having had the same under consideration, beg leave to report:

The Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa Indians, and their forefathers for many generations, have inhabited and possessed, as fully and completely as any nation of Indians on this continent have ever possessed any region of country, all that tract of land lying within the following boundaries, to wit: On the north by the boundary between the United States and the British possessions; on the east by the Red River of the North; on the south their boundary follows Goose River up the Middle Fork; thence up to the head of Middle Fork; thence west-northwest to the junction of Beaver Lodge and Shyenne River; thence up Shyenne River to its headwaters; thence northwest to the headwaters of Little Knife River, a tributary of the Missouri River; and thence due north to the boundary between the United States and the British possessions.

Their possession of this country has never been successfully disputed by any of the neighboring nations or tribes of Indians, but has at all times been recognized as the country of the Turtle Mountain band of the Great Chippewa Nation, of which the three Chippewas, Little Shell, grandfather, father, and son, have been principal chiefs for the past fifty years, and that they have never, by general council by their chiefs or by any authorized delegates, entered into any treaty with the United States by which they ceded any portion of their possessions.

A certain treaty was made at _____ by the Pembina Chippewas, in which treaty a strip of thirty miles off of the east end of their lands, embracing all of the valley of the Red River, was described as being ceded to the United States, and it has since been surveyed and opened to settlement; but this cession never received the sanction of the Turtle Mountain Indians.

And again the United States has encroached on their territory, and has assigned a reservation to a tribe of Sioux on the southern shores of Lake Miniwakau; but aside from this no one has or can justly question the right of these Indians to the territory described.

This vast extent of territory, (over 35,000 square miles,) of which these Indians have possession, they wish to surrender to the United States, and, abandoning their present mode of life, which has from many causes become so uncertain that they are no longer willing to depend

upon it for supplying the old and young of their tribe with food and clothing, they ask for instruction, that they may be able to follow pastoral and agricultural pursuits.

They have therefore petitioned Congress to pass a bill for their relief, authorizing the President to cause a reservation to be set apart and confirmed to them, the full and half-bloods of the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewas, and their descendents in perpetuity, out of the land heretofore described, and to be located and bounded as follows: Beginning at a small lake in the foot-hills east of the Turtle Mountains, and on the boundary between the United States and the British possessions, and running thence due south fifty miles; thence due west sixty miles; thence due north fifty miles to the boundary between the United States and the British possessions, and thence along said boundary to the place of beginning; to establish on said reservation a United States agency, and maintain thereat an agent, a doctor, a practical farmer, a blacksmith, a wagon-maker, and two school-teachers, and annually, for the period of twenty years, to distribute to the heads of the families residing on said reservation and engaged in pastoral or farming life such implements of civilized life and goods as their wants most demand, to the value of \$20,000; and, further, providing that the United States shall issue land-scrip to the amount of six hundred sections of land, that may be located on any part of the land herein described, five hundred sections of which is to be sold by the United States at not less than fifty cents per acre, and the proceeds invested in five per cent. bonds, the interest to be expended in the establishment and maintenance of a manual-labor school on their reservation; and the remaining one hundred sections of scrip not devoted to the school-fund to be subject to the order of the council of the Chippewas making this cession. And said bill may further provide that the United States may direct the settlement on the reservation therein provided for of any part of the Assinaboine tribe or any other Indians of that region of country who may not now be located on any designated reservation.

Your committee report the bill submitted to them, being bill No. 669, entitled "An act authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to set aside a reservation for the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa Indians, and for other purposes," and recommend its passage.