

9-12-1890

Relief of the Stockbridge Indians

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

SEPTEMBER 12, 1890.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 712.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 712) entitled "A bill for the relief of the Stockbridge tribe of Indians in the State of Wisconsin," beg leave to make the following report:

With the exception of an unimportant amendment, which appears in italics in lines 1 and 2 of the House bill, the same measure was favorably reported to the Senate during the first session of the Fiftieth Congress. (*Vide* Report 2262, to accompany S. 1881.) The committee now adopts that report and recommends the passage of the bill.

The report is as follows:

In 1871 the Stockbridge and Munsee tribe of Indians was occupying a reservation in Shawano County, Wis., consisting of two townships of land. A portion of the tribe then desired to terminate their tribal relations and become citizens of the United States. Therefore Congress passed the act which this bill purports to amend. That act provided for the appraisal and sale of the reservation and improvements thereon under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. Two rolls were to be made, one containing the names of those desiring to become citizens, and the other the names of those who wished to preserve their tribal relations. The funds derived from such sale, together with a fund then in the Treasury to the credit of the tribe, were to be divided between the citizens and the Indian parties in proportion to the number of each. The act also authorized the Secretary to reserve from sale a quantity of the reservation, not exceeding eighteen contiguous sections, as a new reservation for the Indian party—those who did not desire to become citizens. The Indian party, or what should remain of the Stockbridge and Munsee tribe after the execution of that law, was to be thereafter known simply as the "Stockbridge tribe of Indians."

This act was carried into effect. The Secretary of the Interior, under its authority, set aside eighteen sections of the old reservation for the use of the Indian party, and this little reservation they are now occupying. The roll, made in pursuance of the act, showed one hundred and twelve persons who determined not to accept citizenship, and who were thus legally determined to thenceforth constitute the "Stockbridge tribe."

The present bill provides that the eighteen sections of land comprising this small reservation shall be examined and appraised in 80-acre lots, the appraisal to describe each lot, stating the value of any improvements that may be thereon, and such other details as are necessary to insure justice to the individual members of the tribe in the further execution of the proposed law. After due notice in the newspapers, the lands are to be sold at public auction and the whole reservation to be disposed of in the same manner as the balance of the two townships were sold and disposed of under the provisions of the law of 1871. The individual members of the tribe, however, are permitted to select from the land, after it has been appraised, as follows: Each head of a family for himself or herself 160 acres, and for each minor child 80 acres, and each adult male, not the head of a family, 80 acres, and each female over eighteen years of age, and not included in any family, 40 acres. The land so selected by any individual to be charged to him or her at the fixed value at \$2 per acre, and such improvements as may be on the same to be charged at the rate stated in the appraisal, it being provided that the value of the lands and improvements so selected shall not

exceed the estimated sum which, in an even distribution, would have fallen to the lot of the selectee.

After the selections are made and the balance of the land disposed of as provided, the fund arising therefrom, together with all money now in the Treasury of the United States to the credit of said tribe, with the interest thereon, and a sum of money, now in the keeping of the United States, recovered, by suits, for pine timber cut and removed from the reservation, amounting to about \$3,557.16, is to be divided among the individuals of the tribe pro rata, except proper deductions are to be made where individuals have selected and had allotted to them portions of the land. Provision is made for taking the necessary enrollment.

Those who now make up the Stockbridge tribe are probably as well prepared to perform the duties of intelligent citizenship as any Indians in the whole country. For many years they have maintained schools on the reservation, and it is said that all the adults can read and write. They all speak the English language.

The bill is in line with the policy of Congress relating to the Indians. It provides for extinction of the tribe and the absorption of the individuals into the body of citizens. It terminates all questions of supervision and annuities, and relieves the State by providing that the land shall be subject to taxation.

We therefore report the bill to the Senate, with certain amendments which will appear, and, as thus amended, recommend its passage.

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