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Memorial of a delegation from the Cherokees, praying protection and relief from the government.

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MEMORIAL

OF

A DELEGATION FROM THE CHEROKEES,

Praying protection and relief from the Government.

JUNE 25, 1834.

Read, laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable the Senate of the United States now in session:

The undersigned, members of the Cherokee tribe, beg leave to present respectfully for the consideration of your honorable body the following facts:

Since the extension of the State laws by Georgia, in 1830, no constitutional elections have been held by the Cherokee people. The constitutional term for which all Cherokee officers were elected expired in the year 1832; since which period all government of Indians, of a constitutional character, has been at an end. Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee, are now in the full exercise of jurisdiction over our territory, and the North Carolina officers have been enforcing the laws of that State for the collection of debts off our people, while white settlements amidst us are rapidly increasing through all these States.

The Indian Committee in the Senate have, we are advised, reported unfavorably on the memorial of John Ross and others, for relief against these evils, with a resolution calling on the President to ascertain and inform the next Congress on what terms the Government could buy out the citizens of Georgia, &c.

We are advised and believe that John Ross and others, under an assumed authority, have protested, on behalf of all our brethren remaining east, against the authority possessed by the undersigned to make any arrangement with the Government of the United States, for themselves or such as may choose to assent thereto. In answer to which we would respectfully refer your honorable body to the treaty of the 6th May, 1828, as well as an act of Congress passed in 1830, giving the President authority to treat with the whole or any portion of any tribe residing east of the Mississippi, &c.

It was not intended by your memorialists to do more than to provide liberal terms for the eighteen hundred Cherokee people who appointed them for that purpose, as well as such others as may hereafter freely and voluntarily avail themselves of the advantages intended to be secured by the contract entered into between ourselves and the commissioner, and which we are advised has been submitted for your ratification or rejection.

We would further respectfully represent that we invited the co-operation of our protesting brethren in procuring for our sinking and suffering people the most liberal terms possible to be obtained from the General Government,

as contemplated in the letter of authority under which we acted, and which was transmitted with the contract for your inspection. In doing this, we had a hope, from pledges given since their arrival at this city, that these delegates would join us in the contemplated arrangement.

We would beg leave further to represent, that the resolution calling to ascertain at what price the interest of Georgia could be purchased, would only have the effect to keep our people in suspense, while starvation and misery wait to visit them at the threshold of their hovels, and a fast approaching moral death prepares them for slavery, or for riots and bloodshed.

The foregoing facts and conclusions are respectfully submitted, with a humble appeal to your honorable body for aid in saving and preserving our people from impending and irretrievable ruin, by a ratification of our treaty lately made with the Government at an early period; that thereby a suffering and misguided people may be saved, whose last hope rests on the magnanimity of the Government of the United States. They are impelled, by the force of circumstances, to forego all attachments for their native land, and seek freedom and happiness where they can be had and enjoyed with all their concomitant blessings; and to this end was it that we entered into the contract, and to this alone to which we now humbly pray your early approval.

Most respectfully,

ANDREW ROSS,
T. J. JACK,
JOHN WEST,
his
JAMES STARR,
mark.

*Delegates from the
Cherokee Nation east
of the Mississippi.*

Attest:

BENJ. F. CURRY.