

3-26-1896

## Petition of Certain Indian Nations

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

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MARCH 26, 1896.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. CHANDLER presented the following

**PETITION OF THE MUSKOGEE OR CREEK AND SEMINOLE NATIONS, PRAYING CONGRESS TO TAKE SUCH ACTION AS WILL PREVENT THE PASSAGE OF THE MEASURES PENDING, WHICH ARE CALCULATED AND INTENDED TO DESTROY THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, TO DEPRIVE THEM OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT, TO ROB THEM OF THEIR HERITAGE, AND TO ABOLISH AND ANNIHILATE THEIR TRIBAL EXISTENCE.**

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*To the Congress of the United States:*

The Muskogee or Creek and Seminole Nations, by their duly authorized representatives, do hereby most respectfully petition your honorable body to take such action as will prevent the passage of the measures now pending before you, which are calculated and intended to destroy our local governments, to deprive us of the right of self-government, to rob us of our heritage, and to abolish and annihilate our tribal existence.

We desire, respectfully, to call your attention to the fact that under the solemn treaty stipulations the right of unrestricted self-government has been guaranteed to our people.

You have recognized and respected that guaranty for many years, and under it we have established and maintained local governments in form similar to your own. Our people have advanced in all the arts of civilization, churches have been established, and a system of common schools has been maintained, and provision for the liberal education of our youth has been provided, and all branches of industry have been promoted. We point with proud satisfaction to the influence of these instrumentalities as tending to Christianize, educate, and elevate our people and fit them for the higher duties and responsibilities which should characterize free men and patriotic citizens.

Under this system of government our people are making commendable and satisfactory progress, and their pride and ambition are stimulated to increased efforts for higher and greater achievements.

While we do not pretend that our governments are perfect, either in form or in the methods of administration, because we realize that no human governments are perfect, still we invite the closest scrutiny into all our local concerns, and particularly as to the protection of the rights of persons and property within our limits. We challenge the most searching investigation into all our affairs, feeling assured that as a result of such investigation our people will receive full and complete vindication.

If at any time the rate of crime in our country has exceeded that of the States of the Union, it has resulted from the fact that a large number of those who belong to the criminal classes have invaded our Territory from adjacent States, in violation not only of our laws, but of the laws of the United States.

It is our desire especially to enter our solemn protest against those statements contained in the report of the Dawes Commission which charges crime, corruption, and misrule among our people, and we challenge the most searching investigation by a committee of honest, impartial, and fair men into the condition of our people, the manner in which our laws are administered, and the provision we have made for the protection of the lives and property of those who may reside among us.

We are prepared to say for our people that upon such a report, coming from such a source, they will be willing to stand and to abide for all the purposes of future action in regard to them.

But we do most solemnly protest against the enactment of any legislation predicated upon the report of the Dawes Commission which will affect the autonomy of our governments.

In all our public and domestic affairs we have sought to pattern after your form of government and liberal institutions, and to emulate the Christian civilization of your intelligent and patriotic people. If we have fallen below the highest standards illustrated by your superior intelligence and advanced civilization, it may be possible that you are in part responsible, as the invasion of our Territory by criminals and covetous land grabbers has disturbed the peace of our country and injured the good reputation of our law-abiding and peaceable people.

In the name of sacred treaty stipulations, in the name of statutory provisions, which you have enacted for our protection, in the name of the decisions of your judicial tribunals, and in the name of national honor we appeal most earnestly to you, the representatives of this great Christian nation, to spare our homes, our firesides, our institutions, and our inestimable heritage, and let us alone until such time as we have, under the inspiration of Divine Providence, encouraged by the example of your liberal institutions and superior civilization, worked out our own welfare and destiny.

Very respectfully submitted.

G. A. ALEXANDER,  
S. B. CALLAHAN,  
E. B. CHILDERES,  
D. V. ANDERSON,

*Delegates for the Creek Nation.*

HULBUTTA MEKKO,  
JOHN JUMPER,

*Delegates for the Seminole Nation.*

SAMUEL H. MILLER,  
*Interpreter.*