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CHIPPEWA INDIANS IN MINNESOTA.

JANUARY 23, 1896.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 1442.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 1442) entitled "A bill to amend an act entitled 'An act for the relief and civilization of the Chippewa Indians in the State of Minnesota,'" respectfully report, with the recommendation that the said bill be amended as follows, to wit:

First. In line 22 of the printed bill, after the name "Stillwater," before the name "Saint Cloud," strike out the name "Taylors Falls" and insert the name "Fosston" in lieu thereof.

Second. In line 36 of the printed bill, after the word "that," strike out the words "no timber upon."

Third. In line 38 of the printed bill, after the word "shall" and before the word "be," insert the word "not."

And that as thus amended the bill do pass.

The act of January 14, 1889 (chap. 24, p. 642, vol. 25, Stat. L.), entitled "An act for the relief and civilization of the Chippewa Indians in the State of Minnesota" (commonly known as the "Nelson Law"), provides among other things for the cession of the Indians to lands occupied by the different bands of Chippewa Indians in Minnesota, the survey thereof, the separation of the same into "pine lands" and "agricultural lands," and the appraisal and sale of the same.

Under said act, as the same has been construed, such sale can not be made until the entire area of such lands, some 4,000,000 acres, shall have been so designated, surveyed, and appraised.

The pending bill amends the original act to the extent of allowing such sales to be made as fast as tracts of 100,000 acres or a less quantity, in the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, shall have been thus surveyed, designated, and appraised.

The first amendment strikes out the name Taylors Falls and substitutes the name Fosston therefor as one of the places of publication, as that town is much nearer said reservation and is a much more important place.

The second and third amendments are merely to make the language of the bill more consistent with that of the amended act.

The propriety of selling the lands as rapidly as they are in a condition to be sold, after survey and appraisal, instead of holding them for many years until all are ready for market can not be questioned.

The growing timber is subject to deterioration and destruction by cyclones, fire, and trespassers, and, as a matter of fact, is rapidly deteriorating instead of increasing in value, and it is also believed that better prices can be obtained from these sales if they are made at different times and in small amounts.

The appraising of the pine on said lands is an expensive transaction and occupies considerable time, and if the lands are held until the entire area is appraised before any sales are made, much of the early work must of necessity be reperfomed, as owing to the constantly changing conditions of the timber no one would care to purchase pine on an appraisal more than two years old, for the same would not then be accurate.

Owing to destructive cyclones and extensive fires during the last two years in northern Minnesota there is at least 50,000,000 feet of "dead, burned, and fallen" timber on said reservation, which, if not disposed of soon, will be almost an entire loss.

This bill is practically the same bill that was passed by the House during the last session, but failed in the Senate because there was some doubt as to the right of the State of Minnesota to the school lands being fully protected, but this is specifically done in the proviso attached to this bill.

The bill which was passed the last session was recommended by the Land Commissioner, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and the Secretary of the Interior, and upon personal consultation they have stated that they are willing that said recommendations be considered as to apply to the present bill and they have expressed themselves as being still more strongly in favor of this bill.