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STOCKBRIDGE INDIANS.

LETTER

FROM THE

SACHEM AND COUNCILLORS OF THE STOCKBRIDGE INDIANS,

IN RELATION TO

The application of John W. Quinney for his share of the moneys of the tribe specified in the several treaties with the United States.

AUGUST 31, 1852.—Laid upon the table, and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable Congress at Washington assembled :

The undersigned, being the chiefs and headmen of the Stockbridge tribe, pray your honorable body to be heard in the following matter :

The name of the Stockbridge, or Muh-hee-kun-eew, has long been known and held with respect by all who have been familiar with past history. In this the name stands among the warmest and truest allies of the early American settlements ; and we trust that it will ever be found there, even to the latest day. In their efforts they have sought liberty, and to maintain their independence. They have preferred a government of their own, not because they would be loose and lawless, but because their condition and state of improvement has demanded a milder system of government than that of the American people. Remaining thus, they have not escaped the common lot of their brethren of being removed, but never without their consent. Among the efforts put forth to effect this, a proposition was made by the government in 1838 to have the tribe removed into the Nebraska Territory, but which they saw fit to decline the acceptance of, on account of its warm and sickly climate for northern Indians. A small but disaffected part, however, accepted and went, causing a division and separation in the tribe. In 1843 Congress passed an act citizenizing the whole tribe contrary to the wishes of the majority, but which act was subsequently repealed in 1846, at the request of the Indian party, restoring that portion back to enjoy their own government and their own customs. This act, however, failing to effect its design—owing to the non-compliance of the citizen party to certain provisions therein specified—a treaty with the Indian party of the Stockbridges was resorted to, which said treaty finished what the act of 1846 could not do, and made a final and unconditional separation between the citizen and Indian

parties of the Stockbridges, defining at the same time the privileges belonging to each party. The said treaty was made in November, 1848, which binds the tribe to remove beyond the Mississippi, whenever the way shall be opened by the government. While awaiting the time to be set, and the way to be opened for their removal, the tribe sent Mr. John W. Quinney to the State of New York, to attend and settle business there pending before the legislature of that State, who, having finished, proceeded on to Washington, where, we learn, he is applying for his former home in Wisconsin, and his share of the tribal moneys specified in the several treaties had between the United States and the Stockbridge tribe. Your memorialists deeply and most painfully regret the step he has taken, and would most earnestly pray your honorable body that he be denied his request, for the following reasons:

1. He has been one of the main leaders of the Indian party, and they are exceedingly loth to part with him in the midst of his already protracted usefulness; and for him now to abandon them, in this hour of need, would be not only injuring his name in the estimation of citizens, but would also be destroying that trust and confidence which his people have long reposed in him. 2. The advantage gained by him would be a mere trifle, compared to the actual evils he would have to contend against. We are aware of the kindness and generosity of your honorable body, and know that you would do nothing but for his best good; but could you see the position in which he will be thrown, should his petition prevail, you would without hesitation refuse to grant the request. 3. Should your honorable body, in your wisdom, see that you have the power to grant to individual members of the tribe moneys stipulated under treaties, without the general consent of the tribe, under a demand for the whole, it will be establishing a dangerous precedent for others to do the like, and thus be, in a short time, the means of a final ruination and extinction of the tribe. 4. Because we deem all such cases as his fully settled by the treaty of November, 1848, which specifies that whenever any one shall separate himself from the tribe, he shall forfeit all his claims in the nation. Under these few remarks we trust we shall be fully understood, and our sole motive and design be interpreted as aiming at his best good and the happiness of this little band, whose future history may be short.

And we, your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

JOSEPH M. QUINNEY, *Sachem.*

AARON TURKEY,

JONAS THOMPSON,

JEREMIAH SLINGERLAND,

Councillors.

STOCKBRIDGE, WISCONSIN, April 28, 1852.