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Letter of the Cherokee delegation of Indians transmitting an address of the Grand International Council of Indians inhabiting the Indian Territory, adopted on the 4th instant, asking a strict observance of treaty stipulations on the part of the United States.

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LETTER

OF THE

CHEROKEE DELEGATION OF INDIANS

TRANSMITTING

An address of the Grand International Council of Indians inhabiting the Indian Territory, adopted on the 4th instant, asking a strict observance of treaty stipulations on the part of the United States.

JUNE 14, 1870.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *June, 1870.*

SIR: We transmit herewith for your information and for the information of the Senate, an address to the government and people of the United States from the "Grand or International Council" of the Indian nations inhabiting the Indian Territory, which met at Okmulgee, the capital of the Muskogee nation, on the first of the present month, earnestly setting forth the *anxiety*, the *dissatisfaction*, and the *discouragement* in their efforts at improvement, produced among all their peoples by the continued agitation in Congress of a threatening and aggressive policy toward them, in the form of territorial bills and other legislation, understood by all to be but entering wedges to disrupt their present political status and relations in order to render it practicable to speculate in their lands.

We beg leave, in this connection, to say further, that nobody, either in the Indian country or in Washington, is deceived by the sophistry of those who urge these territorial bills. All know the welfare of the Indian is not the motive, but the acquisition of his lands. These measures, whenever there is an apparent chance of success, are urged without regard to the oft-repeated fact that those people are doing well, and are the only nations of Indians in the United States whose situation is now, or has heretofore been, so propitious as to result in rapid advancement, and cruelly urged, too, contempt of the protests and pleadings of the Indians to spare them, and in disregard of the repeated pledges of the United States that this Territory shall be to the Indian "a home that shall never in all future time be embarrassed by having extended around it the lines, or placed over it the jurisdiction, of a Territory or State."

We, therefore, respectfully but earnestly invite the attention of your honorable body to a careful consideration of this appeal, which so well ex-

presses the views and sentiments, the hopes and fears of the Indians in the Indian Territory.

Respectfully,

LEWIS DOWNING,
Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation.

WM. P. ADAIR;
J. P. DAVIS,
ARCH. SCRAPER,
SAMUEL SMITH,
C. N. VANN,
Cherokee Delegation.

Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX,
Vice President.

To the President, Congress, and people of the United States :

The undersigned, representing the several nations inhabiting the Indian Territory, whose names are hereto appended, in view of the perils which surround their people, deem it a solemn duty to make this declaration of their views and wishes in regard to their situation.

In the beginning, we take occasion to publicly affirm our earnest determination to preserve the relations of amity toward the government of the United States now existing. Our interests all center in peace—peace with the government and the people of the United States; peace with our neighboring brethren, and peace among the members of each individual tribe and nation; and, as the best means of maintaining that relation unimpaired, we deem a just and fair observance of existing treaty stipulations with the government of the United States as indispensable.

We, therefore, hereby publicly renew our adherence to said treaties, or to such as may be hereafter duly negotiated, and our purpose to comply faithfully with all their stipulations, whether originally favorable or otherwise, and we confidently express our conviction that a like spirit of justice and fidelity will mark the conduct of the government toward the owners and inhabitants of the Indian Territory. The people of that Territory were uprooted from their ancient homes, and placed where they now are through the policy and by the power of the government, for the benefit and convenience of the whites, with assurances and guarantees of ownership in the soil, and protection from interference with their privileges of self-government, and from intrusion upon them, as strong and solemn as language could make them. If the lapse of time, the increase of the white population, and the march of events have removed us from the wilderness in which we were then plunged unwillingly, and placed us in "the way" of our neighbors, the fault is not ours; nor do they invalidate any existing obligations.

We ask nothing from the people and authorities of the United States, aside from their respect and good fellowship, but what they have promised—an *observance of their treaties*. Despite all the vicissitudes of our history, and the terrible ordeal of war, by which we have been scourged with fire and sword, through no fault of ours, but weakness and inability to sustain ourselves, we feel that we are even now progressing in knowledge and improvement in the arts and customs of civilization. We desire no change for the purpose of experiment in the policy of the government in its dealings toward our people and territory. We have

no fault to find with their policy as provided for by our treaties. All that we crave is a simple and honest administration of that policy by competent and honest means. We have been charged with opposition to progress and improvement, but in refutation of that charge, however humble they may seem, we confidently appeal to our houses, our farms, our stocks of horses and cattle, our schools, our churches, and our regularly organized governments. We are not opposed to progress; we are not opposed to improvement; we are not opposed to civilization; we are not opposed to the Christian religion: on the contrary, we acknowledge the conviction that rests upon our minds, that our highest interests and self-preservation itself depend upon progress and improvement. We feel that we cannot safely step backward, but must press forward, inspired by the spirit of the age in which we live, in the arts, pursuits, and achievements of the surrounding civilization. We desire, only, not to be overwhelmed by the influences brought to bear upon us, through the ambition of aspiring men, the cupidity of soulless corporations, and combinations of whatever name, or the mistaken philanthropy of the uninformed. Our forms of government are those of our own choice, modeled after your own, and such as are adapted to our condition. Under them we have prospered when allowed quiet and rest.

The tenure by which we hold our lands is such as we prefer, and such as we believe to be the best for the majority of our people. Observation and reflection lead us to believe that no change can be made in these respects that will not be fraught with mischief and ruin. We wish no change in regard to either, and confidently appeal to you to arrest all attempts to enforce them upon us, except to the extent and in the manner authorized by our treaties now in force, or that may be hereafter concluded. By them we are bound, upon them we rely, and we appeal to you, as the stronger and more enlightened party to these compacts, to honestly and firmly observe their stipulations. We do not wish any material changes in our relations to the government, but we do wish quiet and security.

The constant agitation of questions which vitally affect our welfare are full of evil influences upon our progress. We want a consciousness of protection and security. It is in your power to give both. You have promised them. Grant these, and we shall fear no evil; we shall apprehend for our race neither extinction nor degradation, but progress and civilization will follow, and a brighter page on Indian affairs will be found in the history of the United States than has yet been recorded.

Adopted and signed in international council at Okmulgee, in the Muskogee nation, on Saturday, the 4th day of June, A. D. 1870.

WILL. P. ROSS, *President.*

SAMUEL M. TAYLOR,

S. H. BENGE,

JOSEPH DUVALL,

FROG SIXKILLER,

GEO. W. ROSS, *Secretary,*

Cherokee Delegation.

PLEASANT PORTER.

JOHN R. MOORE.

NOCO YAR-HO-LA, his + mark.

YAR-KIN-HAR MICCO, his + mark.

LAHTE MICCO, his + mark.

YAR-HAR EMARTHLER, his + mark.

LAWYER GIBBONS, his + mark.

MICCO HUTKEE, his + mark,
 TUS-TA-MUG-GEE HARGO, his + mark,
 CHILLY McINTOSH,
 JAMES M. C. SMITH,
 J. M. PERRYMAN,

Creek Delegation.

JOHN JUMPER,
 JAMES FACTOR,
 COT CHILLA,

Seminole Delegation.

SHO-LAR-SAR-BAH, his + mark,
 GAH-HE-GA-LON-GAH-HIS, his + mark,
 HA-HAR-GAH, his + mark,
 WASH KON-NONE, his + mark,
 CO-SHE-SE-GLA, his + mark,
 AUGUSTUS CAPTAIN,

Osage Delegation.

J. M. PERRYMAN, *Secretary of the Council.*