

LEASE OF LANDS TO RAILROAD COMPANIES BY VARIOUS
TRIBES OF INDIANS.

APRIL 19, 1890.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 7708.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred House bill 7708, having had the same under consideration, beg leave to submit the following report:

The object of the bill is to allow the various tribes of Indians known as the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek or Muscogee, Seminoles, and Cherokee Nation or tribes to lease such of their lands as they may desire to such railway companies as now have legal rights of way through their several reservations, along the line of any such roads as may be required for station purposes, round-houses, machine-shops, side tracks, yard and shipping facilities, stock and coal yards, etc., for the period of ninety-nine years.

As is well known, these five tribes, known as the five civilized tribes, are the most advanced and civilized of all our Indians; they each have their local government fashioned after that of our own, each one having the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government, which gives satisfactory protection to life, liberty, and property in their country. They are industrious, intelligent people, well provided with churches and schools; in fact, they are perfectly competent to transact their own business affairs.

The rights of way referred to are privileges granted by Congress and confines the right of way to a limited quantity of land for the road-bed, station, and depot grounds. These grants are made for the good of commerce and are made without the consent of the Indians. Owing to the rapid growth of the country through which these roads run it frequently becomes apparent that the limited quantity of lands given by the grant are inadequate for the successful operation of the road, and, as the lands are all held in common by the people, it is impossible to acquire title of any kind from them. Your committee can see no reason why each of these nations should not be allowed the simple privilege of leasing to the various roads any additional lands needed for their business upon such terms as may be agreed upon between the parties for a limited period of time. Therefore your committee recommend that in line 6 of the bill the word "ninety-nine" be stricken out and the word "twenty" inserted, and at end of the section the following proviso be added:

Provided, That individual leases shall be subject to the approval of the national authorities to which such Indian may belong—

And with these amendments that the bill do pass.

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