

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 9, 1888.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

Petition of members of the Omaha tribe of Indians in regard to citizenship and taxation, and praying for the payment of their annuities.

OMAHA RESERVATION, NEBR.,
December 22, 1887.

To the Senate and House of Representatives, in Congress assembled, greeting:

HOPERA speaks:

“We have been talking over this matter for some days, and to-day it is a fair day. I have prayed to God to show me what to do, and I will now give my opinion. God made me in this world, and made me so that I do not know anything. A woman came here among the Indians and gave me a name (that of citizen), but the Government gave me a name before that, and I want to take the name that Government gave me. She a kind of forced me to take that name, but I want to go by the name I had. That is the reason I asked God to help me.

“Now, I know nothing about the white law; I can not understand it, and am afraid of citizenship.

“God made wild animals; made me live on them. They are now all gone, and that is the reason I have to hold the plow for a living. We old people are ignorant, can not read or write, but my children are scattered over the world to be educated, and they will be citizens. God made you people to know every thing; to live in fine houses; to have machinery and cattle, and plenty of every thing.

“But we are ignorant, and that is the reason I am afraid of it (that is, the citizenship). Our Government told us to go to work and break the prairie; so we did, but our tools and machinery and harness are rotten and worn out; that is why we want you to buy tools and harness to work with.

“My friend will tell you, Congress, true words, and I speak the truth. I want to thank you for helping us and getting what we want, too.”

PA-HANG-GA-MA-NE, the man that walks in front, speaks:

“We know nothing; and you know more than we do, and we depend on you.

“The Government sent an inspector out here, but I never saw an inspector go round among us; but we have obtained a man who knows us to come and write for us. He knows our poverty. This man has been among the Indians (Omaha) for thirty-five years. He goes among the Indians every Sunday and knows us. Therefore we engaged him to write for us. He is a true man.

"They have reported at headquarters that we live well; but we do not; that is the reason I have engaged this man to tell you our true condition.

"Our Government told us what was for our benefit; to go to work. We try it, but I am kept back, away behind. When I see the white people, my heart wishes I was like white people; but I cannot govern it at all; I cannot keep up. To-day, on the reserve, a woman told us we had no Great Father. The first that spoke asked for money; that is useful; and all these men ask for money. Government wants the children to go to school. We have done this, and sent them all over the world to go to school. To-day some of our people have different names, but I myself do not take it—that is, the name of citizen.

"All ye men at Congress, we wish you to help us. You do things all over the world. I want you to help us keep this thing citizenship, away from us. That is all I have to say; but what I know I tell the truth."

[He was dressed in citizen's clothes, as were the others. The last sentence was not approved, and they wished it stricken out, as they knew they were citizens, but they could not understand it, and did not like to be hurried into citizenship too speedily.]

"We want horses from four to seven years old—none younger, none older—to weigh from ten to twelve hundred pounds. If they are crippled, or balkey, or are Texas ponies we will not receive them. We want half horses and half mares.

"We want number-one wagons; none of Studebakers. We want number-one harness."

WA-HA-NA-ZHE, the man that stands at the head, speaks:

"When God made me he never gave me any knowledge to know anything. He let me come into the world naked. Now, here is a man to draw up this petition for me who knows me from a little boy; knows I am poor and need everything. Now, if there is a friend that he has got in the East or in Washington, he is drawing up this petition for the Indians (Omahas), showing the condition they are in. Now, there are two petitions drawn up for the Omahas. We want you to do that which will be the best for us. Do that which will benefit us most. There is a woman who came from the East, Miss Fletcher; she came and told the Omahas that they would not be citizens or pay taxes for twenty-five years. That we must let the children go to school for twenty-five years, and at the end of that time they would be citizens if they wished. Before the twenty-five years were up this woman came and told us we were citizens of the United States. This citizenship is something we can not yet get round to, but the young folks can be citizens at the end of twenty-five years if they wish.

"The reason we never refused to take that patent for our lands, because she told us these things; therefore we took it. Now, you Congress and officers at Washington, if you take pity on the old people that are not able to be citizens we wish you would do it. Before five years the law is over us. What course shall we take? We did not doubt Miss Fletcher's words at all. Now this law is, I think, not alone over me, but over all the Indians in the United States. All the Indians in the United States, if they think they can not get along with the citizenship, will be at the meeting of Congress, and say that they are unable; that is why we send some from us to tell you that we are not able.

"Now, you Congressmen for all parts of the United States know the Indians are not able to carry on their citizenship. If you give them time, at the end of twenty-five years we want to be one of them. At the end of twenty-five years we want you to go round and see them, and if any are fit put them as citizens. You know me, Mr. H., and know what I have been. I wish I had more knowledge to put my words in right. All Congress knows the Indians and knows their needs. I wish you would help us and give us what we need. Now I want you to see yourself if I come to the end of twenty-five years. I want you to see what will be for our benefit till that time.

"Now, about the \$70,000, I wish you to turn that money into something that will benefit us. From this \$70,000, estimate for the horses, wagons, harness, all to be of number-one quality, and to get some one that will get those things that will benefit us. I want you, Congress, to know that there are some men on the reservation that have nothing, and I want them at the end of twenty-five years to have something with which to work. We want our friends to use their power that there shall not be a foot of the reservation sold. We want all the vacant land on the reserve to be saved for our children. We have been selling too much land. What the old men sold to Government does not benefit the tribe at all. When we see a white man selling a piece of land, or a lot even, we look back and see what we sold it for, and it does not amount to anything. All Congress and Christian people who are friends to Mr. H., who knows what we need, we wish you to use your power to help us to what we need.

"We want the interest of the money for the land sold on the western part of the reserve not to be spent for any thing else, but to be paid to us, the tribe, in cash annually."

MA-Æ-GAHÆ, or the arrow-maker, speaks :

"My friend, I have seen you ever since I was a little boy, and you have been here long enough to know my condition. To all Congress I wish to tell a few words. Government has been trying to educate me, but as yet I know nothing. Government says that in twenty-five years the children must be educated. The children of the white when grown up can do as they like. When at Washington I saw the Commissioner, who said : As long as I stay here I will never make the Indian feel bad, because their heart is sorrowful."

WAHANAZHE speaks again :

"All have said what they want, but the estimate is the principal thing ; that is, the things we estimate for. God is near us, and knows the man that tries to help the person and knows the hand that tries to help, therefore we have got you to help us. You know me since I settled here, and you know how I have acted as police for the agent. If there is any chance to get police and agent, I wish we could have them. They have spoken of horses, and an agent is the person that ought to see to the division.

"If there is a chance at all, we want a little of our Indian ways for twenty-five years."

[This last sentence was not sanctioned, and they wished it not written. They told me to alter it as I thought best, but I preferred to write their words, with the explanations afterwards made. They have asked for horses, wagons, and harness, but prefer to draw the money ; but asked for these things, for they feared Congress would not give them money, and supposing some would not spend the money judiciously. But they

wish it distinctly understood that they do not want the \$70,000 in farming utensils, but only the half, or \$35,000, and the other \$35,000 next year in money. As they wished help, as one well acquainted with their wants I can cheerfully add and testify that the \$10,000 now received annually is generally absorbed by the traders at payment, they having drawn it in small amounts as they thought they needed it. Their debts being more than the annuity, hence the remark it did them no good. They need the horses, wagons, harness, and plows, but thought they could buy their plows. They have shown themselves ready and willing to work, and have made great advancements in twenty years, with some drawbacks, to which I need not refer. But I think it would be much to their advancement in civilization to grant them this request, and a great injury to withhold it from them. It is the small pittance of what was promised for this great country, so rich, and why not spend the little remaining in a way that experience has taught them would be for their benefit? As it is, they depend on it to help support them, and can not feel that independence they would feel if it was given, to help start them on in a more prosperous career. They have had several meetings to discuss this matter, and there seems to be but one mind on the subject, unless the fact that some insist on money, while others leave it to Congress to decide what is best for them. I think it would tend much to heal the jealousies that have existed so long and have been also fostered by injudicious actings. After writing the speeches, as it was dark, I left them to write the names themselves, as two or three could write. The list was brought me yesterday, with a request that I would copy it on the caligraph, with what they had said, that all might go together as the voice of the tribe.]

Subscribers' names:

Wa hane ga, his x mark.	The thra ga zu, his x mark.
Ma æ ga he, his x mark.	Wa zuin ga, his x mark.
Noo ga, his x mark.	Wa zhen ga, his x mark.
Tæ nu ga nam ba, his x mark.	Wa duh ku ska, his x mark.
Zhin ga ga he gæ, his x mark.	Ba ah ga, his x mark.
Pahangamane, his x mark.	Pa tha wa ba he, his x mark.
Little Cook, his x mark.	Pa tha wa ba he, his x mark.
George Fox, his x mark.	Ka the he, his x mark.
Wa ha na zhe, his x mark.	Muh za du, his x mark.
Ka ba ha, his x mark.	Cat, his x mark.
Wa zhe ska, his x mark.	Little Nail, his x mark.
Huhuh ar ku pa, his x mark.	Ha the ah ha, his x mark.
William Tyndal Ash sun hun ga, his x mark.	Sha ga shu ga, his x mark.
The he du ba, his x mark.	Willie Howel, his x mark.
Wa ha nu, his x mark.	Cuh gru ska ma ne, his x mark.
He tha pa he, his x mark.	Wa thra tho tuh, his x mark.
Sha da gu na, his x mark.	Elk Bone, his x mark.
Muh ga the ah, his x mark.	A du tuh, his x mark.
Tæ nu ga, his x mark.	Big Bear, his x mark.
Shu da mu zhu, his x mark.	Me ha ska, his x mark.
Muh ha wa kuh, his x mark.	Cyrus Phimlps, his x mark.
Ma hyh wa huh, his x mark.	Ta ha a gub, his x mark.
Wa ba shku, his x mark.	Ha hu da, his x mark.
O huh shin ga, his x mark.	Wa the puh zu, his x mark.
Silver, his x mark.	Cu ha, his x mark.
Eash ta mu za, his x mark.	Wa gu, his x mark.
Muh za ke da, his x mark.	Ku gra æuh zuh, his x mark.
	Big Axe, his x mark.
	Nuh ga æu, his x mark.

Wa ba he shin ga, his x mark.
 E co ha be, his x mark.
 E ga che ga, his x mark.
 Da huh nu zu, his x mark.
 Wa zblinhga sas bæ, his x mark.
 Wa tha ar the, his x mark.
 Wa tha ah he, his x mark.
 Wa du pa, his x mark.
 Ww the sku, his x mark.
 Wa she be na he, his x mark.
 Ha she mane, his x mark.
 Shu ga uh cha, his x mark.
 Wa ka mane, his x mark.
 E ta nu nu, his x mark.
 Ta te shinga, his x mark.
 Wa tuh nu ga, his x mark.
 Wa gra za, his x mark.
 Ka ga ha, his x mark.
 Ge nu zu wa tha, his x mark.
 Sne te thu, his x mark.
 Ha har ga ska, his x mark.
 Pe da e ga, his x mark.
 O ha ma ne, his x mark.
 Sha ga du ba, his x mark.
 A ru ha ga ma ne, his x mark.
 Ha ar ka ma ne, his x mark.
 U ne da bæ, his x mark.
 Nuh e za, his x mark.
 Black bird Sheridan, his x mark.
 Se me ka see, his x mark.
 Gra du ha da, his x mark.
 Mash te thka, his x mark.
 Wa ha na zhe, his x mark.
 Ha a he zhu da, his x mark.
 Ta wa eng ga, his x mark.
 Wa wa ha, his x mark.
 Ta wa ga hæ shing ga, his x mark.
 Wa mee, his x mark.
 E ga sha, his x mark.
 Wa ke da, his x mark.
 Ta nuh ha nu gee, his x mark.
 Sha thu gre tuh, his x mark.
 U ga a, his x mark.
 Wa ba he the, his x mark.
 Ha ha ga nuh ze, his x mark.
 Ga ku we ha, his x mark.
 Gu eh ha be, his x mark.
 Pa he ga zu, his x mark.
 Pe she ba zu, his x mark.
 Nuh ga the ah, his x mark.
 Tæ nu ga he suh, his x mark.

Eash ta sha ba, his x mark.
 Milk, his x mark.
 Me ka a shing ga, his x mark.
 Wa ba a zha, his x mark.
 Ka wa ha, his x mark.
 As ka ma ne, his x mark.
 Hu ha zu, his x mark.
 Wa sha ku, his x mark.
 Muh za duh, his x mark.
 E hu ge nah, his x mark.
 Ga ska wa gra, his x mark.
 O ma ha tu, his x mark.
 He tha ne ka, his x mark.
 Ta de du ba, his x mark.
 Pu dæ ra, his x mark.
 Ga ha ta nuh zu, his x mark.
 Muh zuh ga bruh, his x mark.
 Pa see, his x mark.
 U the se ma ne, his x mark.
 The thra ga u, his x mark.
 U. S. Graut, his x mark.
 Am pah, his x mark.
 Cha cha sna da, his x mark.
 Muh te ga, his x mark.
 Gre the ka, his x mark.
 Pe zu the ga, his x mark.
 Esh ta du ba, his x mark.
 Wa ah, his x mark.
 Ma ha shing ga, his x mark.
 Wa kah ha, his x mark.
 Muh za de, his x mark.
 E hu ge na, his x mark.
 Meh ka tu, his x mark.
 Se da the hee, his x mark.
 Bree tee, his x mark.
 Hash te ga, his x mark.
 Pa ta ga hee, his x mark.
 No knife, his x mark.
 Esh a ga u the he, his x mark.
 Ta za bruh, his x mark.
 Shing ga hang ga, his x mark.
 Nuh ta ra zu, his x mark.
 Daniel Hewet, his x mark.
 Daniel Webster, his x mark.
 Ne ash tuma the, his x mark.
 Spafford Wod hull, his x mark.
 Dwight, his x mark.
 O o h shu da ga ha, his x mark.
 Ta ar tha, his x mark.
 Edward Esau, his x mark.
 Pa ne nam pæzhe, his x mark.

DECATUR, BURT COUNTY, NEBR.,
December 31, 1887.

To Senator MANDERSON :

DEAR SIR : Near a year ago when Dr. Sexton was visiting us, and the subject of the Indians was discussed, he told me if I wrote to you to refer you to him, as he is well acquainted with me, though I am a stranger to you. The Omahas have been trying for some years to get their remaining annuities in two equal payments, but without success. I have told them repeatedly that the only way to accomplish their object was to petition Congress to pass an act to secure it to them, as they wish. You can better judge of the soundness of the advice, though I am fully convinced that their request is reasonable, and, if granted, would be greatly to their advantage, and do much toward helping them to be more independent. The small annuities only lead them to depend on them and go in debt beyond their ability to pay. Their larger annuities had the same effect, even to a worse degree. They have advanced from a wild, drunken, lazy tribe, to an industrious and sober people, and to that point where the assistance asked would be greatly to their benefit. I have passed my fiftieth year in laboring for the good of the Indians, and think my experience is worth something. I can see many things to correct, but will only urge this matter now, and hope their prayer may be answered, as the money is theirs, and they are the best judges how it would be of most benefit to them. As said, they go in debt, and when pay-day comes they enter one door and are not permitted to return by the same, but pass through another where the trader sits with his friends, and where they are made to give up as far as it will go. This leads them to feel their dependence and is injurious to their manhood. They want to pay their debts as far as able, but to treat all alike, paying part if not able to pay all, instead of giving all to one and depriving others who have helped them of any benefit.

I earnestly hope that Congress will devise some means to grant their request. They all want money, but some are willing to take property, feeling that Government can purchase cheaper by buying largely. But there are difficulties in the way, as those getting the contract will desire to make a large profit, as I have so often seen. If you are successful in getting an act passed to give them the \$70,000 in two payments you will benefit them in the judgment of those laboring for their good.

Yours, truly,

WM. HAMILTON.