

PRAIRIE BAND OF POTTAWATOMIE INDIANS IN KANSAS.

APRIL 6, 1886.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 7639.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 695) to provide for the sale of the lands belonging to the Prairie band of Pottawatomie Indians in Kansas, having had the same under consideration, submit the following report:

These lands are situated in Jackson County, Kansas, and about 12 miles from the Union Pacific Railroad. There are 77,357 acres of the land, making a reservation 11 miles square. The lands are mostly rolling upland, with narrow fertile valleys along the creeks and small streams. The upland is good for grazing purposes, while the valleys are excellent for cultivation and agricultural purposes.

The Indians occupying this reservation wear the American dress, speak the English language, and are well advanced in progress and civilization. Hon. H. C. Linn, United States Indian agent, in his report under date of August 16, 1883, in speaking of this Prairie band of Pottawatomie Indians, has this to say:

The industrious and prosperous members are very anxious to possess money and property, which requires them to be energetic and active. They will realize one-half larger crops than in previous years. A number of these Indians are good farmers and managers, * * * They are, with the exception of a few, provided with comfortable houses, which they are enlarging, remodeling, and repairing all the time.

There are about four hundred and forty of these Indians living on this reservation, and in addition there are about two hundred and eighty of them living with the Winnebago Indians in Wisconsin, but who would be entitled to tribal benefits and to allotments, under the provisions of this bill, should they return to the reservation. While many of these Pottawatomie Indians are reasonably industrious and active, there are many among them who are little inclined to labor, and in their present tribal organization they find but little encouragement for individual effort, and but a slight incentive to labor and economy. This reservation is surrounded by well improved and well cultivated farms, and it is the opinion of your committee that this commune should be broken up, and a fair proportion of the reservation allotted in severalty to the members of the tribe, and the balance sold to white settlers, who are looking for homes and asking that this land, now comparatively vacant and unused, shall be opened to the industrious pioneer and made the abiding place of labor and intelligence. The agent heretofore mentioned, in his report for the year 1884, says that these Indians have more land

than they require for their use, and in consequence "leased to T. J. Anderson Company last March a tract for grazing purposes, comprised of the northeast corner of the reserve, containing about 20,000 acres, for a period of ten years, to receive a rental of \$3,000 per annum, to be paid them semi-annually as per capita."

In its present condition the land cannot be sold by the Indians or by the Government, and, as shown by the report of the United States agent, we find in one of the populous growing counties of Kansas a great reservation of more than 77,000 acres of land unnecessarily set apart for the home of a small band of Indians, while industrious and law-abiding citizens are without homes, and are asking that they may be permitted to purchase at its full value a moiety of that so unnecessarily reserved from public occupation and sale. This reservation is an impediment to the growth and development of Jackson County, and a burden to the tax-payers, and public interests and public opinion are in accord in demanding that Indian reservations shall be broken up and the land allotted to the Indians in severalty, with proper restrictions upon alienation, and the surplus sold or disposed of to the thousands seeking homes upon the public domain. The most intelligent and sincere friends of the Indians believe that their ultimate civilization must be accomplished by the substitution of the system of granting lands to them in severalty. In this way their desire for a nomadic life will be changed, and the strongest possible inducement offered them to abandon the chase for the cultivation of the soil, and to prefer the field to the forest, and your committee being in full sympathy with this policy, have prepared the substitute with much care, and report it for the original bill. Your committee are advised that large portions of this reservation have been inclosed with wire fences by cattle men or others, exciting great opposition from the farmers and others who are compelled to cross the reservation in going to and returning from their county seat, and in some instances have led to a breach of the peace. Crimes committed on the reservation by whites must be prosecuted in the local courts, and at the expense of the local tax-payers, while no taxes or revenues can be obtained from the reservation to assist in meeting the burdens imposed upon the people. These suggestions in favor of the public, as well as the suggestions in favor of the Indians, should commend the bill proposed by the committee to the favorable consideration of the House, and as this reservation is much the same as the Kickapoo Reservation in Brown County, Kansas, the provisions of the bill have been made to conform to the bill reported favorably by the committee for the sale of such reservation and to the recommendations of the Secretary of the Interior.