

RAMSAY CROOKS.

APRIL 22, 1890.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 1595.]

On the 14th day of August, in the year 1840, John Lawe, of Green Bay, Wis., being indebted in the sum of \$22,520.59 to Ramsay Crooks and others, his associates, trading under the style of the American Fur Company, executed a deed of trust to one Samuel Abbott, agent and trustee for said fur company, in order to more fully secure his said creditors, of certain lands belonging to him, situated in the then Territory of Wisconsin, the deed of conveyance being duly recorded in the land records of Brown County, Territory of Wisconsin.

After the execution of the above-stated deed and subsequent to the decease of the grantor, Lawe, his heirs being desirous of recovering possession of said lands entered into negotiations with the American Fur Company for that purpose. At the time of the decease of the said John Lawe there were due and owing to him certain large sums of money and debts in the course of his trade with various Indian tribes, viz:

From the Menomonee Nation	\$50,000
From the Chippewa Nation	50,000
From the Winnebago Nation	30,000
Also one claim against Stanislaus Chippen, an Indian trader	4,000
And one claim against the Squirrel's daughter, a Menomonee, for about	1,000

Making in all a total sum of..... 135,000

These claims were offered by the heirs of Lawe, as a consideration for the reconveyance of the land; and the fur company, after satisfying itself of the validity of the matter, took an assignment of said claims in liquidation of the debt of Lawe, as per agreement in writing dated the 1st day of September, 1846, and assigned by the heirs and executors of Lawe, and Mr. Abbott for the fur company; whereupon the latter (Abbott), on the 20th day of October following, released to the heirs all the right, title, and interest of the fur company to the land in question which it had attained by virtue of the deed from Lawe.

After the above transfers were made Samuel Abbott died, and the executors of Lawe, being desirous of carrying out the said original agreement and assignment with said company, and of securing to them all the benefits and advantages of said assignment of September 1, 1846, on the 14th day of November, 1851, by their certain instrument of writing, duly authorized Ramsay Crooks, esq., the president of said fur company, by an irrevocable power of attorney, to ask, demand, sue for, and recover all and every of the claims before mentioned

against said Indians, thus fully confirming to him and said company the former assignment made to Abbott.

The authenticity of these claims is set forth in Appendix M of the report of the Secretary of the Interior to the first session of the Forty-eighth Congress.

The Congress of the United States in the consideration of any bill, therefore, for the benefit of the Menomonee Indians should, in all justice to the present holders of the claims, make due provision for their liquidation.

The Indians acknowledge the validity of the demands, and in their petition embraced in Appendix M, before referred to, request that they be paid. As between individuals an assignment of a legal right to recover just debts, is enforceable in the courts of justice, and the principle is just the same in these cases.

The right to the property assigned is still a legal interest vesting in the fur company, although the remedy is taken away, and the only relief of the creditors, who are such for great and valuable consideration, is by appeal to the equity and conscience of Congress.

A bill has been reported by this committee (H. R. 4647) authorizing the sale of timber on the lands of the Menomonees, and as this is a just demand against said Indians, your committee recommend the passage of the bill with the following amendment, that the amount named as due be changed from \$15,861.25 to \$11,961.63.

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