

SALE OF TIMBER RESERVED FOR CHIPPEWA INDIANS.

FEBRUARY 21, 1891.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 13500.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred House bill 13500, submit the following report:

These Indians occupy a reservation in the northern part of the State of Wisconsin, upon which there is at present pine timber standing and down, estimated to be worth in the neighborhood of \$600,000. The timber has attained its growth, and it is believed that from wind, fires, and depredations, is deteriorating in value.

This bill proposes to allow the Indians to log this timber themselves, sell the logs when delivered on the banks of the streams or in market, to the highest bidder, the money arising from such sale to be deposited in the United States Treasury and held for the benefit of the tribe. A similar practice is now being followed among the Menominee Indians in the eastern part of the State, and is found to work well. It gives the Indians employment at remunerative prices, and learns them habits of business and economy, and has a very civilizing influence upon them.

Many of these Indians have had considerable experience in logging, both by working in the camps of white men and also upon land of their own. The bill provides that 20 per cent. of the net proceeds may be expended each year under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of the Indians, and the balance kept in the Treasury for the benefit of the tribe, interest upon which shall be paid to them annually at 5 per cent. This bill was transmitted to this Congress by the President December 22, 1890; is recommended by the Secretary of the Interior and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (see Executive Document No. 23, Fifty-first Congress, second session). The game upon the reservations occupied by these Indians is becoming very scarce, and it is believed if they are not allowed to cut their timber and receive the avails of it, much suffering among them is sure to ensue. If this bill becomes a law the timber can only be cut under rules prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. The bill in all its features is well guarded to protect the rights of the Indians who have asked for this legislation and favor this bill. The letter of the Secretary of the Interior referred to in the above mentioned Executive Document is as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, December 18, 1890.

THE PRESIDENT:

I have the honor to submit herewith a copy of a communication of the 25th ultimo, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, which embodies substantially the provisions of three bills, referred to in Senate report No. 2710, Fiftieth Congress, second ses-

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sion, and a draft of a bill (No. 2) prepared by the Commissioner, which is similar to that enacted for the Menominees (26 Stats., 146).

The Commissioner expresses a preference for bill No. 2, for the reason the Chippewas are as capable of performing this work as the Menominees, but says if Congress decides in favor of the other it will be acceptable to his office.

As some disposition of this matter seems necessary, I have the honor to recommend that these bills be transmitted to Congress with request that one of them receive favorable consideration.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN W. NOBLE,
Secretary.

The following is an extract from a letter relating to the bill under consideration:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, February 10, 1891.

SIR: I am in receipt of your communication, dated February 6, 1891, in which you inclose copies of bills No. 13500 and 13501, relative to the disposition of timber on Chippewa reservations in Wisconsin, etc., and state that if either of these bills meets my approval, and I am willing to render what assistance I can, you think you can secure its passage. * * *

The importance of the passage of this bill, or of some measure for the disposition of the timber on the Chippewa reservations, is fully shown in office report of November 25, 1890. The passage of the bill, or either of them, would relieve this office of much embarrassment in dealing with this question, and would certainly be for the permanent benefit of the Indians.

If it be possible I trust that House bill 13500 may become a law during the present session.

Very respectfully,

T. J. MORGAN,
Commissioner.

Hon. M. H. McCORD,
House of Representatives.
(Through the Secretary of the Interior.)

We therefore report back the bill No. 13500, and recommend its passage.

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