

The Nelson Act

An Act for the Relief and Civilization of the Chippewa Indians in the State of Minnesota

The Statutes at Large of the United States of America from December, 1887, to March, 1889, and Recent Treaties, Postal Conventions, and Executive Proclamations. Vol. XXV, pp. 642-646.

CHAP 24.- *An act for the relief and civilization of the Chippewa Indians in the State of Minnesota.*

Chippewa Indians of Minnesota

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized and directed, within sixty days after the passage of this act, to designate and appoint three Commissioners, one of whom shall be a citizen of Minnesota,

Commissioners to negotiate for relinquishment of lands

To be appointed.

whose duty it shall be, as soon as practicable after their appointment, to negotiate with all the different bands or tribes of Chippewa Indians in the State of Minnesota for the complete cession and relinquishment in writing of all their title and interest in and to all the reservations of said Indians in the State of Minnesota,

Lands excepted.

except the White Earth and Red Lake Reservations, and to all and so much of these two reservations as in the judgment of said commission is not required to make and fill the allotments required by this and existing acts, and shall not have been reserved by the Commissioners for said purposes, for the purposes and upon the terms hereinafter stated; and such cession and relinquishment shall be deemed sufficient as to each of said reservations, except as to the Red Lake Reservation,

Assent of tribes.

if made and assented to in writing by two-thirds of the male adults over eighteen years of age of the band or tribe of Indians occupying and belonging to such reservations; and as to the Red Lake Reservation the cession and relinquishment shall be deemed sufficient if made and assented to in like manner by two-thirds of the male adults of all the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota; and provided that all agreements therefore shall be approved by the President of the United States before taking effect:

Proviso. Allottees not to be disturbed.

Provided further, That in any case where an allotment in severalty has heretofore been made to any Indian of land upon any of said reservations, he shall not be deprived thereof or disturbed therein except by his own individual consent separately and previously given, in such form and manner as may be prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. And for the purpose of

ascertaining whether the proper number of Indians yield and give their assent as aforesaid, and for the purpose of making the allotments and payments hereinafter mentioned, the said commissioners shall, while engaged in securing such cession and relinquishment as aforesaid and before completing the same,

Census to be taken.

make an accurate census of each tribe or band, classifying them into male and female adults, and male and female minors; and the minors into those who are orphans and those who are not orphans, giving the exact numbers of each class, and making such census in duplicate lists, one of which shall be filed with the Secretary of the Interior, and the other with the official head of the band or tribe;

Assent to extinguish Indian title.

and the acceptance and approval of such cession and relinquishment by the President of the United States shall, be deemed full and ample proof of the assent of the Indians, and shall operate as a complete extinguishment of the Indian title without any other or further act or ceremony whatsoever for the purposes and upon the terms in this act provided.

SEC 2. That the said commissioners shall, before entering upon the

Bond and oath of commissioners.

discharge of their duties, each give a bond to the United States in the sum of ten thousand dollars, with sufficient sureties, to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior, and conditioned for the faithful discharge of their duties under this act, and they shall also each take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and to faithfully discharge the duties of their office, which bonds and oaths shall be filed with the Secretary of the Interior.

Compensation.

Said commissioners shall be entitled to a compensation of ten dollars per day for each day actually employed in the discharge of their duties, and for their actual traveling expenses and board, not exceeding three dollars per day.

Interpreters.

Said commissioners shall also be authorized to employ a competent interpreter while engaged in the performance of their duties, at a compensation and allowance to be fixed by them, not in excess of that allowed to each of them under this act.

Removal of Indians to White Earth Reservation.

SEC. 3. That as soon as the census has been taken, and the cession and relinquishment has been obtained, approved, and ratified, as specified in section one of this act, all of said Chippewa Indians in the State of Minnesota, except those on the Red Lake Reservation, shall, under the direction of said commissioners, be removed to and take up their residence on the White Earth Reservation,

Allotment of lands on Red Lake Reservation.

and thereupon there shall, as soon as practicable, under the direction of said commissioners, be allotted lands in severalty to the Red Lake Indians on Red Lake Reservation, and to all the other of said Indians on White Earth Reservation, in conformity with the

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act of February eighth, eighteen hundred and eighty-seven, entitled "An act for the allotment of lands in severalty to Indians on the various reservations, and to extend the protection of the laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians, and for other purposes"; and all allotments heretofore made to any of said Indians on the White Earth Reservation

Prior allotments confirmed

are hereby ratified and confirmed with the like tenure and condition prescribed for all allotments under this act:

Provisos.

Provided, however, That the amount heretofore allotted to any Indian on White Earth Reservation

Deductions.

shall be deducted from the amount of allotment to which he or she is entitled under this act:

Provided further, That any of the Indians residing on any of said reservations may,

Allotments on other reservations.

in his discretion, take allotments in severalty under this act on the reservation where he lives at the time of the removal herein provided for is effected, instead of being removed to and taking such allotment on White Earth Reservation.

Survey of ceded lands.

SEC. 4. That as soon as the cession and relinquishment of said Indian title has been obtained and approved as aforesaid, it shall be the duty of the Commissioners of the General Land Office to cause the lands so ceded to the United States to be surveyed in the manner provided by law for the survey of public lands, and as soon as practicable after such survey has been made, and the report, field-notes, and plats thereof filed in the General Land Office, and duly approved by the Commissioner thereof, the said Secretary of the Interior, upon notice of the completion of such survey shall appoint a sufficient number of competent and experienced examiners, in order that the work may be done within a reasonable time,

Subdivision into forty-acre lots.

who shall go upon said lands thus surveyed and personally make a careful, complete, and thorough examination of the same by forty-acre lots, for the purpose of ascertaining on which lots or tracts there is standing or growing pine timber,

“Pine lands.”

which tracts on which pine timber is standing or growing for the purpose of this act shall be termed “pine lands,” the minutes of such examination to be at the time entered in books provided for that purpose, showing with particularity the amount and quality of all pine timber standing or growing on any lot or tract, the amount of such pine timber to be estimated by feet in the manner usual in estimating such timber, which estimates and reports of all such examinations shall be filed with the Commissioner of the General Land Office as a part of the permanent records thereof, and thereupon that officer shall cause to be made a list of all such pine lands, describing each forty-acre lot or tract thereof separately,

Minimum Valuations

and opposite each such description he shall place the actual cash value of the same, according to his best judgment and information, but such valuation shall not be at a rate of less than three dollars per thousand feet, board measure of the pine timber thereon, and thereupon such lists of lands so appraised shall be transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior for approval, modification, or rejection, as he may deem proper.

New appraisals.

If the appraisals are rejected as a whole then the Secretary of the Interior shall substitute a new appraisal and the same or original list as approved or modified shall be filed with the Commissioner of the General Land Office as the appraisal of said lands, and as constituting the minimum price for which said lands may be sold, as hereinafter provided, but in no event shall said pine lands be appraised at a rate of less than three dollars per thousand feet board measure of the pine timber thereon.

Lists to be filed.

Duplicate lists of said lands as appraised, together with copies of the field-notes, surveys, and minutes of examinations shall be filed and kept in the office of the register of the land office of the district within which said lands may be situated, and copies of said lists with the appraisals shall be furnished to any person desiring the same upon application to the Commissioner of the General Land Office or to the register of said local land office.

Pay of examiners.

The compensation of the examiners so provided for in this section shall be fixed by the Secretary of the Interior, but in no event shall exceed the sum of six dollars per day for each person so employed, including all expenses.

Agricultural lands.

All other lands acquired from the said Indians on said reservations other than pine lands are for the purposes of this act termed "agricultural lands."

Sale of pine lands.

SEC. 5. That after the survey, examination, and appraisals of said pine lands has been fully completed they shall be proclaimed as in market and offered for sale in the following manner:

Advertisement

The Commissioner of the General Land Office shall cause notices to be inserted once in each week for four successive weeks in one newspaper of general circulation published in Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Duluth, and Crookston, Minnesota; Chicago, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Detroit, Michigan; Philadelphia and Williamsport, Pennsylvania; and Boston, Massachusetts,

Auction sale.

of the sale of said lands at public auction to the highest bidder for cash at the local land office of the district within which said lands are located, said notice to state the time and place and terms of such sale. At such sale said lands shall be offered in forty-acre parcels, except in case of fractions containing either more or less than forty acres, which shall be sold entire. In no event shall any parcel be sold for a less than its appraised value.

Private sale.

The residue of such lands remaining unsold after such public offering shall thereafter be subject to private sale for cash at the appraised value of the same upon application at the local land office.

Sale of agricultural lands.

SEC.6. That when any of the agricultural lands on said reservation not allotted under this act nor reserved for the future use of said Indians have been surveyed, the Secretary of the Interior shall give thirty days' notice through at least one newspaper published at Saint Paul and Crookston, in the State of Minnesota, and,

To be sold under homestead law.

at the expiration of thirty days, the said agricultural lands so surveyed, shall be disposed of by the United States to actual settlers only under the provisions of the homestead law:

Provisos

Provided, That each settler under and in accordance with the provisions of said homestead laws

Prices, etc.

shall pay to the United States for the land so taken by him the sum of one dollar and twenty-five cents for each and every acre, in five equal annual payments, and shall be entitled to a patent therefor only at the expiration of five years from the date of entry, according to said homestead laws, and after the full payment of said one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre therefor, and due proof of occupancy for said period of five years; and any conveyance of said lands so taken as a homestead, or any contract touching the same, prior to the date of final entry, shall be null and void:

Prior entries not disturbed.

Provided, That nothing in this act shall be held to authorize the sale or other disposal under its provision of any tract upon which there is a subsisting, valid, pre-emption or homestead entry, but any such entry shall be proceeded with under the regulations and decisions in force at the date of its allowance, and if found regular and valid, patents shall issue thereon:

Second entries.

Provided, That any person who has not heretofore had the benefit of the homestead or pre-emption law, and who has failed from any cause to perfect the title to a tract of land heretofore entered by him under either of said laws may make a second homestead entry under the provisions of this act.

Funds to be deposited to credit of Chippewas.

SEC.7. That all money accruing from the disposal of said lands in conformity with the provisions of this act shall, after deducting all the expenses of making the census, of obtaining the cession and relinquishment, of making the removal and allotments, and of completing the surveys and appraisals, in this act provided, be placed in the Treasury of the United States to the credit of the Chippewa Indians in the State of Minnesota as a permanent fund, which shall

Interest.

draw interest at the rate of five per centum per annum, payable annually for the period of fifty years, after the allotments provided for in this act have been made, and which interest and permanent fund shall be expended for the benefit of said Indians in manner following:

Distribution of interest.

One-half of said interest shall, during the said period of fifty years, except in the cases hereinafter otherwise provided, be annually paid in cash in equal shares to the heads of the families and guardians of orphan minors for their use; and one-fourth of said interest shall, during the same period and with the like exception, be annually paid in cash in equal shares per capita to all other classes of said Indians; and the remaining one-fourth of said interest shall, during the said period of fifty years, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, be devoted exclusively to the establishment and

Schools.

maintenance of a system of free schools among said Indians, in their midst and for their benefits; and at the expiration of the said fifty years the said permanent fund shall be divided and paid to all said Chippewa Indians and their issue then living, in cash, in equal shares:

Proviso.

Provided, That Congress may, in its discretion, from time to time, during the said period of fifty years,

Advances, from principal.

appropriate, for the purpose promoting civilization and self-support among the said Indians, a portion of said principal sum, not exceeding five per centum thereof.

Anticipating interest.

The United States shall, for the benefit of said Indians, advance to them as such interest as aforesaid the sum of ninety thousand dollars annually, counting from the time when the removal and allotments provided for in this act shall have been made, until such time as said permanent fund, exclusive of the deductions hereinbefore provided for, shall equal or exceed the sum of three million dollars, less any actual interest that may in the meantime accrue from accumulations of said permanent fund; the payments of such interest to be made yearly in advance, and in the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior, may, as to three-fourths thereof, during the first five years be expended in procuring live-stock, teams, farming implements, and seed for such of the Indians to the extent of their shares as are fit and desire to engage in farming, but as to the rest, in cash:

Re-imbusement.

and whenever said permanent fund shall exceed the sum of three million dollars the United States shall be fully reimbursed out of such excess, for all the advances of interest made as herein contemplated and other expenses hereunder.

Appropriation.

SEC.8, That the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars is hereby appropriated, or so much thereof as may be necessary, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to pay for procuring the cession and relinquishment, making the census, surveys, appraisals, removal, and allotments, and the first annual payment of interest herein contemplated and provided for, which money shall be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior in conformity with the provisions of this act.

Statement to be made.

A detailed statement of which expenses, except the interest aforesaid, shall be reported to Congress when the expenditures shall be completed.

Approved, January 14, 1889.

