

## The TOMAHAWK.

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White Earth Agency, Minn.

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER devoted to the interests of the White Earth Reservation and general Northwestern News. Published and managed by members of the Reservation.

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THE TOMAHAWK  
WHITE EARTH, MINN.

### RESERVATION LANDS TO LEASE

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ATTORNEY AT LAW.

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White Earth, Minn.

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JOHN LEECY Prop.

## WHAT DOES THE MORRIS ACT PROVIDES?

An appropriate reply to this question is contained in the following clause of the act, and is the key to the whole situation.

"All the expenses incurred in carrying out the provisions of this Act as to the examining and listing of said lands, and the selling, cutting, and sealing of said timber, shall be paid by the Secretary of the Interior out of the proceeds of the sale of said timber."

It will be observed that all the expenses of whatever nature must be borne by the Indians. This will include the examining of the lands, the advertising, selling, cutting, hauling and sealing of the timber, and, in fact, all the expenses necessarily connected with the lumbering operations, which will be in addition to all the other incidental expenses provided by the act.

With a minimum price of four dollars per thousand feet fixed on Norway pine and five dollars for white pine, it is more than probable that the Chippewas of Minnesota will become more indebted to the government than they now are, for, we will venture to predict, that these expenses will exceed the sum which will be derived from the sale of the timber after it is cut and hauled to landings and mills, and we believe, a successful bidder on a tract of pine will not take such precautions in regard to the operating expenses as he would if he had to pay them from his own pocket. When it is taken into consideration that even with the most careful economy the cutting and hauling of the timber to landings and mills will cost as much if not more than the minimum prices fixed on the timber, the question which naturally presents itself is, wherein are the Indians benefited by its sale?

No safeguards are placed around their interests in regard to limiting the expenses of the logging operations, and the lumbermen, if they should be inclined to do so, may charge exorbitant prices for every thing they may have done since the act compels them to conduct the operations, and in this way not only consume the amount of the purchase price but bring the Indians out in debt to them. For instance, the pine timber on the four ceded townships of this reservation brought much less than seven thousand feet, and who can say that it will not cost all or nearly all of this per thousand feet to fulfill the requirements of the act although there is no park to protect in that vicinity.

As the Morris Act appears to us, the Chippewas of Minnesota are going to give away their pine timber for nothing for the privilege of having it removed from their ceded reservation and in order that employment may be given to some hungry office seeker who look upon the Indians as legitimate prey.

It may be possible that from the lack of men a few mixed-bloods may be employed as laborers in the camps, but if others can be found to work in these camps even the mixed-bloods may be excluded under some trivial pretext.

The government should take notice that the Chippewa Indians are just beginning to find out what the Morris Act means, and that there is more than a possibility of a resistance to its operations when the work of removing the timber begins, if their present feeling is any indication of what they might do.

## COMMUNICATION.

Mr. Editor;

Dear Sir--It appears to me that something ought to be done to stop the extravagant expenditures of the Indians' money on the Leech Lake and Red Lake Chippewa Indian reservations in this state of Minnesota. The Indians here are helpless as to having any effect whatever on the Department as to a change in the rulings under the Morris bill, regulating the cutting of the timber and preventing the Forestry people from taking 231,400 acres of their land and 5 per cent of the timber on 200,000 of this amount; also 10 sections around the lakes that contain several millions of timber (pine) that they hold in tact and will not be cut, and under the rulings made by the Secretary the lumbermen are compelled to clean up all the tops and defective timber left on the ground and burn the same as fast as the cutting is done. This ruling applies as well on lands where the timber is to be sold on December 5th, 1903, under the General Land Office as well as all the land included in the Forestry reserve, which means 200,000 acres to be cut over less the 10 sections and the 25,000 acres of classified agricultural land. The estimate cost of clearing this land in accordance with the rules regulating the same is from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per thousand feet. Of course where the timber is defective and blown, necessitating the cutting of waste of a large per cent of the timber, this means a heavy expense to clear the land of so much refuse, and all of this expense must necessarily be borne by the Indian, for this reason; the people who contemplate bidding on the timber contained in the Forestry selection as well as that outside the Forestry, have concluded to offer \$2.00 to \$2.50 less per thousand feet, the estimate cost of cleaning up the land, to protect themselves. These people have appealed to the authorities I believe to have that part of the regulations cut out, as it makes it so uncertain and so indefinite as to how to bid, not knowing to what extent the expense of clearing up the ground might be. In some instances where so much old windfalls and blown down timber has accumulated for years, a great quantity of the land has been logged at diverse times by people under the dead and down contracts thus leaving enough green timber standing to class such lands as timber land; and a bidder who bids on such a tract must, in picking up the scattering pine, be compelled by the regulations to clean up the debris accumulated for years in cutting dead and down timber, and in those cases it will cost \$25 to \$50 per acre to clear the ground--when perhaps there would not be from one to 4 or 5 trees per acre or perhaps 2 to 3 thousand feet. This is easily explained on the Forestry selection, as they claim to have no funds to pay for clearing up the land and want the Indian to pay for it, who today, at least 80 per cent of them, are living as they did fifty years ago, living on boiled fish with what little flour and tea they can get in trade for fish and berries in the season, thinly clad, not sufficient clothing to keep them comfortable in the winter, and it is not an unusual thing to see them begging for something to eat. They in this condition--with 8 to 10 million dollars worth of land and timber on the two reservations under the Leech Lake agency (including Red Lake), and at present a reported indebtedness to the

government of 44 million dollars accumulated.

Since the passage of the Nelson bill January 14, 1889, this has all been done under the shrewd management of the Department, which pledged itself to the Indian to dispose of his land and timber to the best possible advantage--to whom? to the Indian, or to the employees of the Department who are sucking the last drop of sap from the Indian pine?

With an indebtedness of 44 million now staring him in the face and the expense that will necessarily accrue in cutting and landing and sealing the timber under the present rules, with an expense of two hundred dollars or over per day since September last 1902 made by Warren's examining corps, with the expense of a crew running lines around Indian allotments, with the expense of a Great General Superintendent of logging at a salary of \$2,500 and expenses annually, and still another superintendent of logging at \$6 per diem (the law says) and as many assistants as he can find use for at \$4 per day; with an additional corps of scalers at from 75 to 80 dollars per month--Question: How much will the Indian have left at the end of the five years? Answer: "Nit." The present employers or grafters tell you this is done to keep the lumbermen from stealing the timber. Well of course, it makes a difference if the lumbermen steal the timber--the grafter employe could not get his.

Talk about your P. O. scandal and the Oklahoma Land Trust and the old time Dawes Commission business, look at the finger of scorn pointing to the Minnesota Indian scandal, and wonder why it is that the Indian is uneasy.

The Forestry convention recently held in Minneapolis was attended by some of the Minnesota experimental champions who understand claim that the greater portion of these reservations are unfit for agricultural purpose and only fit for a Park Reserve. Well now, what would it cost the state of Minnesota to send Mr. Chapman around and look at the crops produced off the lands joining the reservation and in fact some small field of 5 to 10 acres on the Reserve, and that on strictly Jack Pine soil which they claim is useless to cultivate. Then, when one comes to understand that there is on these reservations as fine hardwood tracts as lay in any country and that there is hardly a tract of 160 acres within the boundaries of these Reserves (except in the valley of the Mississippi river near Ball Club and Bena) but what has more or less tillable land, besides abundance of the very best quality of hay, and in many places cedar, tamarack, spruce and pulp wood, telegraph poles and cedar posts that are always in great demand and could be made profitable to the homesteader, with good market facilities for produce of all kinds as well as wood and other material. With the G. N. Ry. running 48 miles east and west and 22 miles south from Cass Lake, and only 107 to Crookston and 165 miles to Duluth, this makes this land easy of access to the settler, and with thousands of people crowded up in the cities waiting an opportunity to enter the 1400 homesteads selected by the Forestry, who it appears has no provisions made to pay for said land and thus taking from the Indian's pocket 289,000 dollars that the settler would have to pay at \$1.25 per acre for the same and waiting according to the provisions of the Morris bill, to be thrown open to

settlement as soon as practicable after the land had been examined and cut, but the forestry people claim it is not valuable. Now under the law allowing the sale of deceased Indian allotments on these reservations it provides, that, when the heirs apply to have an allotment sold under this act, it is the duty of the agent in charge to have the tract appraised by some one in the employ of the government agency. In no instance, I believe, has any of this land been valued at less than \$4 per acre and in some instances it has brought as much as \$28 per acre, and in no instance can it be sold less than its appraised value. Lands joining the Reserve of the same status has been sold recently for \$10 to \$12 per acre in its wild uncultivated state, except that most all of the merchantable timber (even Jack pine) has been removed. All this goes to show the untruthfulness in the statement that it is of no use only for Park purposes.

Now what benefit do the people derive from this Park? It segregates from Homestead Entry 231,400 acres of land in the very heart of the state of Minnesota. It deprives 1400 people of securing 160 acres of land on which they could establish a home, at a nominal price of \$1.25 per acre with little inconvenience, as the land is all easy of access, it having rail roads running through east and west and south, and also cuts off the tax to the country surrounding it, which with land and improvements made by settlers, would amount to thousands of dollars to the towns and villages, as well as the state and schools. For what? To have a tract of land that embraces some of the lakes and rivers held in reserve to give a few people who have time and leisure to make a trip into the so-called reserve. Come in on a special car if they are able, sidetrack at the depot, with perhaps a cook, a supply of liquors and cigars, make a trip to the lake, perhaps take a house boat and go to Star Island, a distance of two miles, go back to their car, pull out, and the chances are they never come back. Next comes a party of three or four for a fishing trip, put up at the hotel, take a bus to the lake, get into a rowboat, fish a few hours, return to the hotel and take the first train out. Never come back again--why? Everybody got their graft in on them, it being too expensive, pass the Reserve up and tell their friends. But the Forest reserve has advantages to a few, that class of government employes who are engaged in establishing the lines, selecting the five per cent to be left standing, marking U. S. on each tree to be left for reforestation, they say, but is left to blow down; but it gives employment to a few who undoubtedly appreciate it.

Now dear reader, don't you think this is a nice proposition to lay before the liberty loving people? If not, come again, and I will give you more facts.

OBSERVER.

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