

18th CONGRESS, }
1st Session.

[133]

MEMORIAL

OF

John Ross, Geo. Lowrey, Major Ridge, and Elijah Hicks.

DELEGATES

FROM THE

Cherokee Nation of Indians.

APRIL 16, 1824.

Read, and referred to a committee of the whole House on the state of the Union.

WASHINGTON:

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1824.




MEMORIAL.

To the House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

We, the undersigned delegation from the Cherokee Nation, now on a visit at the seat of Government of the United States, on matters of vast import, as will appear by the President's message of the 30th of March last, and its accompanying documents, humbly beg leave to submit, before your honorable body, a few remarks, which we are bound, (as we believe) to make, under a sense of duty to our nation, as well as to ourselves. It is with unfeigned regret and pain we discover the sentiments which are expressed by the governor of Georgia, in his letter to the Secretary of War, of the 28th of February last; and also, those expressed by the Georgia delegation in Congress, to the President of the United States, on the 10th of March last. We cannot but view the design of those letters as an attempt, bordering on a hostile disposition towards the Cherokee Nation, to arrest from them, by arbitrary means, their just rights and liberties, the security of which are solemnly guarantied to them, by these United States. As you have a full view of the subject before your honorable body, it is not our purpose to be superfluous: therefore, we will take occasion to assert, under the fullest authority, that all the sentiments expressed, in relation to the *disposition* and *determination* of the nation, *never again to cede another foot of land*, is *positively* the *production* and *voice* of the *nation*, and what has been uttered by us, in the communications which we have made to the Government, since our arrival in this city, is expressive of the *true sentiments* of the *nation*, agreeably to our instructions, and that not *one word* of which has been *put into our mouth* by a *whiteman*. Any surmises or statements to the contrary, are ill-founded and ungenerous. We forbear to animadvert on the aspersion pointed at our chiefs, by the pen of the Georgia delegation; it is but a subterfuge. The Cherokees are informed on the situation of the country west of the Mississippi river; and there is not a spot, out of the limits of any of the states or territories thereof, and within the limits of the United States, that they would ever consent to inhabit, because they have unequivocally determined, never again to pursue the chase, as heretofore, or to engage in wars, unless by the special call of the Government, to defend the common rights of the United States: and, as a removal to the barren waste, bordering on the Rocky Mountains, where water and timber are scarcely to be seen, could be for

no other object or inducement, than to pursue the buffalo, and to wage wars with the uncultivated Indians in that hemisphere—imposing facts, speaks from the experience which have been so repeatedly realized, that such state of things would inevitably be the result, were the Cherokees to emigrate to that country. But such an event will never take place. The Cherokees have turned their attention to the pursuits of the civilized man; agriculture, manufactures, and the mechanic arts, and education, are all in successful operation in the nation, at this time; and, whilst the Cherokees are peacefully endeavoring to enjoy the blessings of civilization and Christianity, on the soil of their rightful inheritance; and whilst the exertions and labors of various religious societies of these United States are successfully engaged in promulgating to them the word of *truth* and *life*, from the *sacred volume of holy writ*, and under the patronage of the General Government—they are *threatened with removal or extinction*. This subject is now before your honorable body for a decision. We appeal to the magnanimity of the American Congress for justice, and the protection of the rights, liberties, and lives, of the Cherokee people. We claim it from the United States, by the strongest obligations, which imposes it upon them by treaties; and we expect it from them under that *memorable* declaration, “that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

We, therefore, in behalf of, and under the highest authority of, the Cherokee Nation, have hereunto fixed our signatures, at Washington City, this 15th day of April, 1824.

JNO. ROSS,
GEO. LOWREY,
MAJOR RIDGE, his  mark,
ELIJAH HICKS.