35TH CONGRESS, 1st Session. } SENATE. { REP. COM. No. 17.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 21, 1858.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. PUGH made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Bill S. 46.]

The Committee on Public Lands, to whom was referred Senate bill No. 46, "to grant the right of pre-emption in certain lands to the Indiana yearly meeting of the Society of Friends," has had the same under consideration, and recommends its passage.

The committee adopts the report on this subject made at the last Congress, namely:

The Committee on Public Lands, to whom was referred the memorial of Charles F. Coffin, clerk, "signed by direction and on behalf of the meeting for sufferings of Indiana yearly meeting of Friends," has had the same under consideration, and asks leave now to report:

It appears that almost, or quite, forty years ago, the Indiana yearly meeting of Friends, in conjunction with the Baltimore and Ohio yearly meetings of the same religious society, appointed a permanent committee to found a mission with the Shawnee tribe of Indians, and instruct them, as far as possible, in the arts of civilized life, in letters, and in the doctrines of the Christian religion.

Acting under the direction of these yearly meetings, and furnished with funds by them, from time to time, the committee established a school, and made other suitable arrangements for the mission at Wapakousta, in the State of Ohio, where the Indians then resided. The school was maintained faithfully until the Shawnees disposed of their land in Ohio to the United States, and migrated to their present location beyond the Mississippi river, when, at the earnest solicitation of the chiefs and councillors of the tribe, the committee removed the school and mission to what is now Kansas Territory, and there erected buildings, and made other valuable improvements, upon a tract of land designated for that purpose.

It appears, furthermore, that in the new establishment, as in the former one, these yearly meetings, by their committee, labored zealously, and in good faith, to promote the temporal and spiritual welfare of the Indians with whom they have been so long connected.

Previous to the treaty, dated May 10, 1854, those in charge of the

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school and mission were allowed, by the authorities of the tribe, to enclose and use as much land as they required, and obtain timber from any part of the Shawnee domain. By that treaty, however, the committee of Friends was restricted to a tract of three hundred and twenty acres, constituting the mission farm, which tract is almost or entirely destitute of timber. And it seems to be now impossible to maintain the establishment, even with a large annual expenditure of money from the yearly meetings above mentioned, unless a supply of timber can be secured.

The yearly meeting of Indiana, therefore, asks permission to locate and purchase, as a pre-emption right, at the price of one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre, two tracts in the neighborhood of the mission farm, namely: one hundred and twenty acres west of the farm, and two hundred acres on the south side of the Kansas river.

This application has been approved (the committee understand) by the Shawnee tribe in council, as well as by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Commissioner of the General Land Office. The only obstacle is in the fact that our general statutes do not authorize any such pre-emption. The Commissioner of the Land Office speaks of it, however, in this language:

"The application is one which would recommend itself favorably, I should think, to the consideration of Congress; and it would be gratifying to me to learn that it had met with favor from that body, who alone can grant relief in the premises."

It should be recollected, also, that this mission is the first ever established with the Shawnees; that they were then in a wild, and, in fact, desolate condition; that they are now comfortably established in a fertile country, and have cultivated farms, with horses and cattle, and are far advanced in civilization.

The treaty of May 10, 1854, reserved two or three entire sections of land for the benefit of the Methodist mission—an establishment of much later date—for which payment is to be made by the education of a specified number of the Shawnee children. In these circumstances the proposition of the society of Friends to purchase the mission farm assigned to it and two neighboring tracts of woodland, three hundred and twenty acres, at the usual price in cases of pre-emption, seems to your committee entirely reasonable.

A bill is reported, therefore, in accordance with the prayer of the memorial, with a section (third) intended to prevent the lands, or any part of them, from ever being used for the purposes of speculation.