

ERECTION OF A TABLET OR MARKER TO COMMEMORATE THE
INDIAN PEACE COUNCIL AT MEDICINE LODGE, KANS.

FEBRUARY 22, 1927.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. LUCE, from the Committee on the Library, submitted the
following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 17024]

The Committee on the Library, to which was referred H. R. 17024, authorizing the appropriation of \$2,500 for the erection of a monument or other form of memorial at Medicine Lodge, Kans., to commemorate the holding of the Indian peace council, at which treaties were made with the Plains Indians in October, 1867, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with the recommendation that it pass with the following amendments:

Amend the title by striking out the words "monument or other form of memorial" and in place thereof insert the words "tablet or marker."

In lines 5 and 6, strike out the words "monument or other form of memorial" and in place thereof insert the words "tablet or marker."

Mr. John C. Best, President of the Medicine Lodge Peace Treaty Association, has written the following account of the incidents leading up to the council and the description of the council itself:

To appreciate the importance of the peace treaties signed by the United States and the Indians at Medicine Lodge, Kans., in October, 1867, it is first necessary to review briefly the conditions leading up to the treaties, the circumstances under which they were signed, and their effect on the subsequent development of Kansas, Oklahoma, and other Middle Western States.

There are several accounts extant which show the hardships imposed upon the settlers of Kansas by the numerous Indian raids that occurred prior to the treaty proceedings. During the years 1866 and 1867 the country was still disorganized as a result of the great Civil War from which it had just emerged, and taking advantage of the lack of Government restraint the Indians swept across Colorado and Kansas, deluging our western prairies with the blood of the white settlers. The most detailed account of conditions at that time will be found in "Kansas in the Sixties," by Samuel J. Crawford, war governor of Kansas.

His article is too lengthy to quote in full, but the following is a typical quotation from his work:

"During the summer the Indians had raided the frontier settlements northward to the Republican River and routes of travel, westward to the Colorado line. They had killed, wounded, and scalped a large number of men, women, and children. They had robbed and burned the houses of settlers, murdered the grading parties on the Kansas Pacific Railroad, and committed other atrocities too numerous to mention."

During the summer of 1867 a train of supplies en route to the Indians was seized and taken to Fort Larned by order of General Sherman. This left the Indian women and children of the war parties without food and clothing, and deprived the warriors of the ammunition that they needed to continue their raids upon the settlers. The various traders were then rounded up and the Indians' last source of supplies was thus cut off.

Being out of ammunition and retreating southward, closely pursued by the troops, the Indians were met by messengers from the peace commission that had been appointed by the United States Government. They were invited to a general council to be held on the old council grounds at Medicine Lodge early in October, and as winter was approaching and the Indians were practically destitute of supplies, they welcomed this opportunity to secure a general amnesty, a full pardon for the crimes they had committed, and food and clothing for themselves and their families.

The peace commission that was to meet and treat with them at Medicine Lodge was appointed under authority of an act passed by Congress in July (1867) "To establish peace with certain hostile Indian tribes," and was composed of the following gentlemen:

Hon. N. G. Taylor, Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Gen. W. S. Harney, United States Army.

Gen. A. H. Terry, United States Army.

Gen. C. C. Augur, United States Army.

Gen. J. B. Sanborn, United States Army.

Col. S. F. Tappan.

United States Senator J. B. Henderson, of Missouri.

Gen. William T. Sherman, of Civil War fame, was also a member of the commission and accompanied the others most of the way to Medicine Lodge, being in command of the detachment of the United States Army that served as escort to the peace commission. General Sherman had to leave before the conference took place, however, and he turned over the command to Gen. C. C. Augur. On Sherman's invitation, Hon. E. G. Ross, Dr. J. P. Root, Col. J. K. Rankin, and Governor Crawford, of Kansas, accompanied the commission, and to some extent participated in the council proceedings.

The guide and chief interpreter of the expedition was Dick Curtis, a plainsman of wide experience, while the Army scouts were Col. W. F. Cody, better known as "Buffalo Bill," and George Bent, founder of "Bent's Fort," Mo. The eastern papers were represented by their best correspondents, and the reporter for the Cincinnati Commercial was Henry M. Stanley, later famous throughout the world as the great African explorer and missionary. The peace conference made a deep impression on Stanley, and in volume 1 of Stanley's *Early Travels* he devotes considerable space to an excellent description of the event.

The peace commissioners and their escort of about 1,500 United States soldiers arrived and established their camp on the north bank of Medicine Lodge River on October 2, 1867. The train of supplies that had been taken by Sherman's order in the summer and held at Fort Larned, was brought down to the council grounds, and the boxes of goods were piled up in full view of the Indians as a token of some of the material benefits that peace would bring them. The Indians gradually drifted in, tribe by tribe. Those bands that had been on the warpath during the summer were the last to arrive, and they came in very cautiously, as though fearing a trap. Being assured of safety, however, they finally came up and pitched their tepees some 3 miles from the camp of the commissioners.

While the Indians were present in force, accounts differ as to the exact number of them that attended. Governor Crawford states that there were at least 5,000, while other eyewitnesses place the number as high as 15,000.

Five tribes of the Indians were represented at the conference, namely, the Kiowas, Comanches, Apaches, Cheyennes, and Arapahoes. All their leading chiefs were present, and the following were chosen as representatives of the tribes in the peace conference:

For the Kiowas: Sitting Bear, Stumbling Bear, One Bear, Bear Lying Down, Black Eagle, The Crow, Kicking Eagle, Stinking Saddle, White Bear, Womans' Heart.

For the Comanches: Ten Bears, Wolf's Name, Standing Feather, Dog Fat, Silver Brooch, Iron Mountain, Horses Back, Gap in the Woods, Painted Lips, Little Horn.

For the Apaches: Wolf's Sleeve, Poor Bear, Bad Back, Brave Man, Iron Shirt, White Horn.

For the Cheyennes: Bull Bear, Little Rock, Slim Face, Tall Bull, White Horse, Little Bear, Black Kettle, Gray Head, Little Robe, Whirlwind, Buffalo Chief, Spotted Elk, Curly Hair, Heap of Birds.

For the Arapahoes: Little Raven, Young Colt, Little Big Mouth, Storm, Yellow Bear, Tall Bear, Spotted Wolf, White Rabbit.

When all the representative chiefs had arrived, the peace commissioners and the Indians assembled in a large tent, and after shaking hands all around, and smoking the pipe of peace, the proceedings were opened by the Hon. N. G. Taylor, who made a stirring plea for peace between the Indians and the whites. Bull Bear, leading war chief of the Cheyennes, stated the case for the Indians, and admitted that they were on the warpath to prevent Kansas and Colorado from being settled by the pale faces. He claimed that the Indians owned the country and did not want railways built through it to scare away the buffalo. He was followed by Little Raven, principal chief of the Arapahoes; Ten Bears, war chief of the Comanches; Kicking Eagle, of the Kiowas; and Wolf's Sleeve, of the Apaches.

The proceedings lasted for a week without anything being accomplished, and all this time Satanka and Satanta, two leading Kiowa chiefs, warlike and always boldthirsty, sat quietly through the meetings without taking any active part. After the conference had proceeded about a week, however, Satanta suddenly rose and made a vehement speech, boasting of what he had done, after which he walked out of the meeting and was followed by the other chiefs.

The next day many of the chiefs did not return to the council, and as bands of mounted Indians could be seen riding round as if in preparation for an attack, the Army officers were decidedly uneasy. There were only 1,500 soldiers in the escort of the peace commission, while at the lowest estimate fully 5,000 armed Indian warriors were on the scene. The soldiers were drawn up in line of battle with the artillery trained on the Indians, but when the latter saw that an attack would involve a terrible slaughter of their warriors, they decided not to fight. The conference was resumed the next day, and an agreement was finally reached with the Indians, a treaty being concluded with the Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches on October 21, and with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes on October 28. The Indians signed in their customary manner, namely, by touching the pen as a clerk wrote their name, and as many of them insisted on remaining mounted during the proceedings, and galloped furiously around, several of the signatures were secured only with difficulty. The treaties provided that both parties pledged themselves to keep the peace, and not commit any unlawful acts against the person or property of the other. The Kiowas, Comanches, and Apaches received a large reservation north of the Red River, on lands that formerly belonged to the Choctaws and Chickasaws, and the Cheyennes and Arapahoes received a reservation of about 3,000,000 acres in the Cherokee outlet, in what is now the State of Oklahoma. In consideration of these grants, the Indians waived all claim to lands in Kansas and Colorado; agreed not to molest the settlers or the construction gangs of the railroads, and to deliver to the officers of the United States any members of their tribes who violated the provisions of the treaties. In addition to the grants of land, the United States undertook to provide suitable instructors for the Indians, both in education and the various arts; to furnish yearly a large quantity of supplies, and to erect on the reservations the various agency, school, and other buildings called for in the treaties.

The treaties were largely successful in their purpose and had a most important bearing on the future development of Kansas and Oklahoma. There were one or two small outbreaks among the Indians in subsequent years, but they were isolated attacks made on the settlers by small bands of the Indians, and none of the signatory tribes as a whole, or even any large proportion of their members, took the warpath after signing the treaties.

Congress failed at first to provide the funds necessary for carrying out the provisions of the treaties, and the resentment this inspired led to the few raids mentioned. The raids were promptly suppressed, however, and the Indians

driven back into their reservations. The treaties were to the settlers of Kansas the dawn of a new era—freed from the constant dread of Indian warfare with all its horrors, they were at liberty to devote all their energies to the peaceful development of their State. Born in the throes of an internecine struggle, cradled in its childhood by Indian battles and the raids and counter raids of the Civil War, peace came at last to Kansas with the signing of the Indian treaties—a peace that has remained undisturbed.

It is the understanding of your committee that the fiftieth anniversary of this council is to be held at Medicine Lodge in October of this year and deems it fitting that the Federal Government should have some part in the recognition of this important event.

