

Surplus Land
Question

THE SURPLUS LAND QUESTION

Supplementary Agreement
Executive Committee, Choctaw Nation
South McAlester, I. T.
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{ D. C. McCURTAIN, Chairman
HAMPTON TUCKER
L. C. LEFLORE
HENRY ANSLEY } Committee

The Surplus Land Question.

A great deal is heard of the sale of the surplus lands under the Supplementary Agreement. Section 14, of the Supplementary Agreement, contains the surplus land provision and is as follows:

SECTION 14. "When allotments as herein provided have been made all citizens and freedmen, the residue of lands not herein reserved or otherwise disposed of, if any there be, shall be sold at public auction under rules and regulations and on terms to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior, and so much of the proceeds as may be necessary for equalizing allotments shall be used for that purpose, and the balance shall be paid into the Treasury of the United States and to the credit of the Choctaws and Chickasaws and distributed per capita as other funds of the tribes."

SURPLUS LANDS.

The "residue of lands", or surplus lands, referred to in the above section, will be

First, Lands that will be left after each undisputed Choctaw and Chickasaw citizen (including freedmen) has taken his allotment;

Second, Lands that will be relinquished by "court citizens" and Mississippi Choctaws when we ratify the Supplementary Agreement.

The lands left after each undisputed citizen has taken his allotment will be hilly and mountainous lands and so poor that no citizen would allot them. Therefore, the only surplus lands of value to be sold are those that will be relinquished by "court citizens" and Mississippi Choctaws.

RESERVATION OF SURPLUS LANDS.

Those who oppose the Supplementary Agreement state that the surplus lands will be reserved and sold in large

tracts, in sections, and in townships. These statements are false, and are not warranted by any provision of the Supplementary Agreement.

As soon as the land office is opened in each nation, all the good land in each nation will be filed on by undisputed Choctaw and Chickasaw citizens (including freedmen). When that is done, the lands remaining will be so poor that no citizen would allot them. This poor land will not be in one spot; it will be scattered over each county in each nation. The lands now held by "court citizens" are not all in one spot, but are located at different points in each county in each nation. The lands that would be reserved by the Dawes Commission for Mississippi Choctaws would be lands that no other citizen has allotted and would be at different points in each county in each nation. How, then, can these surplus lands be reserved and sold in large bodies, or in sections, or in townships? Common sense shows the absurdity of such statements.

SALE OF SURPLUS LANDS.

The statement is made by those opposing the Supplementary Agreement that these surplus lands will not bring what they are worth. *Remember*, these surplus lands will be sold under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior at *public auction* to the *highest bidder*. The sale of our town lots is made under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior. It is well known that in these sales he has protected the interests of the Choctaws and Chickasaws and that our town lots have brought prices satisfactory to us all. Our surplus lands cannot, and will not, be sold *all* at one time nor in one body. They will be sold one tract at a time, and each tract will be separately sold. The date of the sale of each tract will be made known to the world. The public auction sale guarantees to every man an opportunity to bid, and a citizen will have the same right to buy these surplus lands that a white man has.

PAYMENT OF SURPLUS LAND MONEY.

The money for which surplus lands are sold will be used for two purposes, as follows:

First, For equalizing allotments. Under the Supplementary Agreement lands are not divided into smaller tracts than ten acres. If the grade of land a citizen selects is below the average and his allotment is 423 acres, he will get 420 acres and the value of three acres in money. If the grade of land he selects is above the average and his allotment is 225 acres, he will get 220 acres and the value of five acres in money.

Second, The money left after equalizing allotments will be paid into the Treasury of the United States and will be paid *direct* to each Choctaw and Chickasaw citizen by a *bonded officer* of the United States Government at the same time the rest of our money is paid, which will be within one year after March 4, 1906.