

THE INDIAN CHIEFTAIN

Vinita, Indian Territory
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D. M. Marrs, Editor

MESSAGES OF ISPARHECHER

In the regular message of Chief Isparhecher on the assembling of the Creek council the following allusions only to the recently signed agreement were found.

You are doubtless anxious to learn the results of the efforts of your commissioners whom you appointed to negotiate a treaty with the United States government. I have heard that a treaty has been concluded and I expect it to be officially reported to this office, I cannot express an opinion on its merits, but hope to have an opportunity of doing so before many days.

In conclusion, gentlemen, permit me to remind you that, as a people, we are in the midst of what appears to be one of the most extraordinary crises

that have ever confronted our people and it will require the exercise of your coolest and friendliest effort in the work of evolving good and providing safety out of it for our waiting people. You may have to canvass grave questions involving the very life or death of our nation. In the faithful discussion of such questions, honest differences of opinion must need appear, but I indulge the hope that your deliberations will always be characterized by kindly and respectful consideration of each other's views, however divergent, and that any heat of debate that may arise in your discussion will not be that of personal feelings, but the impulse of true and patriotic devotion to duty.

THE SPECIAL MESSAGE

Gentlemen:

I herewith transmit the report and treaty recently concluded by your commission on the part of the United States, for your consideration.

It will be observed by you that it provides for the allotment of our lands and the extinguishment of

our tribal title. I regard this feature of the treaty as being very dangerous, and therefore very objectionable. Allotment of lands to Indians has heretofore proven disastrous in every instance and is sure to result likewise with us when we try it. It is a system of holding land that is entirely new to our people. Some of us however, tried the sad experiment in Georgia and Alabama a little over half a century ago, resulting in our final removal therefrom. My advise is never to try it again.

Our system of land tenure has proven successful and satisfactory to us through all the years of our tribal existence. Never have we had a homeless wanderer during all that time, nor are we likely to have one so long as we continue to hold our lands as we now do. We now hold our lands by the united power of two governments, general and local. By allotment we substitute the power of our local government. Each one of our citizens will then have to employ the protective power over his realty, that has been afforded him by the local governments. In other words every citizen will take upon himself the duty of protecting his home that is now being done by the combined wisdom and strength of

the Muskogee nation. Not only so but he assumes the responsibility of coping single-handed with the avaricious land sharks of the American continent. Many of the shrewdest and most enlightened citizens of the United States are homeless simply because they were not able single-handed to protect their homes from sharpers.

We now have no suits about land titles, for our land title is not disputable and never will be until we allot our lands. Then the courts will be thronged with them as they are in Oklahoma.

We now pay no taxes on our lands and never will till we allot, and then the tax-gatherers will become as numerous as they are in Oklahoma. These things will inevitably follow the allotment of our lands. I therefore advise you to weigh and calmly consider these facts before accepting this treaty. I think it far better for us to stand firm by the treaties we have and plead the justice of our cause, by all lawful and honorable means, than enter into this agreement.

I fail to see any betterment of our condition by this agreement, but to the contrary I can see much that will be greatly to our detriment. But you have had my

views on this subject heretofore, and I do not deem it necessary to add anything at this time. I am aware that the U. S. Government is urging us to change our relations with her and has expended considerable money in surveying our country and in maintaining a commission for the past three years, but all of this has been done at the option of that government and not at our request. We have not asked for any of these things, but they have been asked for by grasping, unsatiated boomers, who are always on the trail of the Indian, until every foot of his land is opened up. And when we make this treaty they will be the people to first throng this country to scheme us out of our homes. It is simply a question as to the ownership of our lands. The boomers are hungry for them and it seems the only means for making them accessible is by allotment. It therefore remains for you to decide whether or no you will make yourselves a party to this scheme of the boomers. No, we have not asked for a new treaty nor for the allotment of our lands, but we have frequently requested the government to remove from our country the intruders, which has never been heeded,

although solemnly guaranteed to be done by existing treaties. If intruders cannot be removed from our country at this time the question arises will they be removed by the promises of a new treaty to do so? It seems that the Cherokees have found both and found new treaties to be better than old ones on this subject. I believe we will have the same experience when we try it. For this reason I withheld my approval of the act of your called session last August authorizing your commission to treat. At that session of council I presented to you my views as to what seemed to me to be the most advisable course for us to pursue at this time. I am still of the opinion that we should test our constitutional rights before the supreme court of the United States, and provision should be made at once for procuring the ablest council to represent us.

In conclusion, gentlemen, permit me to say that I have endeavored honestly to present to you my views on the subject before you, and feel that in this I have discharged my duty and indulged the hope that you will consider the question in the same spirit of earnestness, that has actuated me, and discharge the duty you owe your constituency intelligently, honestly and faithfully.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully.

Your Obedient Servant.

ISPARHECHER, Prin. Chief

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EDITORIAL ON MESSAGE BY ISPARHECHER

Head Chief Isparhecher has sent a special message to the Creek council in session at Okmulgee, declaring that he regarded the allotment treaty agreed upon by the Dawes and Creek commissions as highly dangerous, and continues: "Allotment of lands to Indians has heretofore proven disastrous in every instance and is sure to result likewise to us when we try it. It is a system of holding land entirely new to our people. Some of us, however, tried the said experience in Georgia and Alabama a little over half a century ago, resulting in our removal therefrom. My advice is to never try it again.

The existing system of tenure was declared to have been so successful that there had never been a homeless wanderer among the Creeks, while a change

would mean the substitution of individual power for the power of two governments -- federal and tribal.

"Many" continued the chief, "of the shrewdest and most enlightened citizens of the United States are homeless simply because they are unable, single-handed, to protect their home from sharpers. We have now no suits about land titles, for our land titles are not disputable and never will be until we allot our lands. Then the courts will be thronged with them, as they are in Oklahoma. We now pay no tax on our lands and never will until we allot; then the tax gatherers will become as numerous as in Oklahoma. These things will inevitably follow the allotment of our lands. Therefore I advise you to weigh and thoroughly consider these facts before accepting this treaty.