

It is interesting to note the fundamental difference between the philosophy and government of the Cherokee Nation and the United States regarding the territory of the Cherokee Nation. U.S. Senator Dawes at the Lake Mohawk Conference in 1883, referring to the Cherokee Nation stated:

The head chief told us that there was not a family in that whole nation that had not a home of its own. There was not a pauper in that nation, and the nation did not owe a dollar. It built its own capitol, in which we had this examination, and built its schools and its hospitals. Yet the defect of the system was apparent. They have got as far as they can go, because they own their land in common. It is Henry George's system, and under that there is no enterprise to make your home any better than that of your neighbors. There is no selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization. Till this people will consent to give up their lands, and divide them among their citizens so that each can own the land he cultivates, they will not make much more progress.

The frailty of the Cherokee Nation noted by the U.S. Senator was that it was not selfish enough to compete in American "civilization." A collation of corporations, white homesteaders, cattlemen, robber barons, and do-gooders advanced the policy of allotment. Allotment was the breaking up of the tribal governments and allotting the tribal lands by giving legal title of a pro rata share to each tribal citizens. The "enlightened" policy was to allow the Indians to be like white people each with their plow, 110 acres and farm house.

Senator Teller, in 1881, cautioned against the allotment policy:

If I stand alone in the Senate, I want to put upon the record my prophecy in this matter, that when 30 or 40 years shall have passed and these Indians shall have parted with their title, they will curse the hand that was raised professedly in their defense to secure this kind of legislation and if the people who are clamoring for it understood Indian character, and Indian laws, and Indian morals, and Indian religion, they would not be here clamoring for this at all.

The minority report of the House Indian Affairs Committee in 1880, cited the real reason for allotment.

...the real aim of this bill is to get at the Indian lands and open them up to settlement. The provisions for the apparent benefit of the Indian are but the pretext to get at his lands and occupy them * * *. If this were done in the name of greed, it would be bad enough; but to do this in the name of humanity, and under the cloak of an ardent desire to promote the Indian's welfare by making him like ourselves whether he will or not, is infinitely worse." * * *⁷