

can understand but one language. Every sentence spoken in the Cherokee tongue occupies fully twice as much time as when rendered in English; thus during session hours the time is mostly spent in reading and interpreting committee reports and communications, and work is mostly attended to in committee rooms where interpreters are also generally required. Most of the business is done by half a dozen of the ablest men of each body, and many of the present incumbents are but learning their first lessons in legislative matters. Chaplains are not among the appointed officers who receive pay for services and all prayers are offered gratuitously. A limited number of desks are provided, but the majority are without, and generally rest easily against the wall, apparently taking no notice of what is going on. As the members use tobacco freely, and almost continually in some form, the room in which they sit is often enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke. Spectators are allowed the liberty of listening and run from one room to another, oftentimes making the proceedings difficult to be understood, because of noise, and at this session so much interest is being taken as to what action the council will pursue on certain questions, there is a greater number of visitors than usual. This law-making body is not in any way free from the professional lobbyists, who now-a-days loiter around legislatures while in session.

Four weeks have passed since the council assembled. The thirty days limitation expires December 7th, but an extra session may be called by the chief, but only to consider such business as he may place before them. Very little has been accomplished thus far, and questions which public interest has been centered on, are now but beginning to be considered. The propositions regarding the sale of the land known as the Cherokee Outlet were referred to the Senate committee on foreign relations, and recently they have reported. As there are some of the Nation's ablest men considering this question, no doubt the Indian's welfare will be kept in view. To this committee the United States commissioners submitted all the propositions which they were empowered to; and, providing the Indians cannot do better, those offers may be accepted.

The Cherokees, from the lands ceded to them in this Territory, have already sold to the government (held in trust for the various tribes) over two million acres of land on their Outlet to settle friendly Indians on, and the money accruing from those sales, at their appraised value, is invested in United States bonds, as is provided by treaty that all currency received from sale of lands shall be.

The commission, in addition to offering \$1.25 per acre for the unoccupied land, propose adding an amount to that already paid sufficient to raise the price of those lands settled by friendly tribes, to \$1.25 per acre, with the exception of the lands occupied by the Osage Nation.

All the land sold to these tribes—the Poncas, Nez Percés, Pawnees, Missourias, Otoes and Osages—were conveyed to them at the same time and in similar manner, and it is not explained why the Osage tract is omitted, though the payment offered could not be otherwise claimed for any of the lands thus sold. If the Cherokees desire, the whole amount which the conveyance of the land will bring—over \$7,000,000—can be divided among the people, each individual citizen obtaining about \$300 therefrom; or one-half can be paid to the people, and the interest on the balance, invested in U. S. bonds, will give them an annual income of \$177,000, or the whole sum can be invested at 5 per cent per annum. In fact, the money is to be completely at the disposal of the Cherokees. In all payments to the people of the nation the white adopted citizens do not share—only those of Indian blood, and freedmen and their descendants who were slaves in the nation at the time of the war and returned prior to 1868; also two small tribes, the Delawares and Shawnees, who have settled among the Cherokees and become part of the nation.

Nothing definite has yet been done, but the offer of \$1.25 will probably be rejected. The committee in whose hands the matter was intrusted, has reported adversely, presenting two resolutions, viz., the majority favoring informing the commissioners that the proposals were not acceptable; the minority providing for a committee to treat further with the commissioners. But a substitute has been introduced (and will probably pass), providing for a delegation of four or six to continue negotiations, with instructions to decline the present offer and submit a proposition to sell the land for a greater value, in connection with the understanding that the United States will rectify grievances of which the Indians complain. This substitute was introduced by Hon. L. H. Bell, President of the Senate, and one of the shrewdest politicians and legislators among the Cherokees. It is almost certain this will be the next movement. The principal chief still continues his opposition to a sale under present proposals, and the majority in both houses are pledged to the same political party and platform as the chief. This fact has its weight.

The commissioners' negotiations with other Indians, however, have apparently a better prospect of success. The Choctaw and Chickasaw National Councils have considered with favor the proposals for the sale of their lands lying between the 98th degree and the 100th degree longitude, and containing over 7,000,000 acres, on which there are now friendly Indians; and have appointed delegates to meet the commissioners, empowering the former to sell the lands. They are now on their way to the Cherokee capital; but the action of the Cherokees will have a bearing upon the course of the representatives from the other civilized nations. Lands occupied by the Indians, not as civilized as the five nations, lying between the

'outlet' and the Choctaws' and Chickasaws' lands will possibly become government property. The Indians there have no title to the lands on which they are, but are controlled entirely by the United States; so negotiations with them as to a sale are not necessary.

The Territory of Oklahoma is situated in the very heart of the Indian country, surrounded on all sides by Indian lands. The object in treating with these Indians is to open up a sufficient area for settlement to form an additional Territory or State. If negotiations are successful, more than twenty million acres will be added to the Oklahoma tract—the lands of the Indians being decreased and the domain of the white man extended. This has been such a prominent policy for many generations that it is now looked upon as a proper plan to follow. No doubt the public land strips west of the Territory will also be included in the proposed extension.

The disposition to be made of those Indians now living upon the tracts before mentioned is to offer them a choice of lands in their reservations before they are opened to settlement, and become citizens of the United States. In the event of those tribes refusing to accept this disposition, abandon their tribal relations, and live among the whites, the government may move them on to the lands owned by some of the other nations. In case the Cherokees refuse to sell their lands, these Indians can be placed on the 'outlet' lands, after an appraised value is paid the present owners.

In the treating at present with the Cherokee Council, many of those interested in the question have construed certain statements of the commission and Secretary of the Interior as an attempt to coerce them into selling. Prominent in this regard is the assertion that if the 'outlet' or 'strip' is not sold at the present offer, friendly Indians will be settled thereon and a less value per acre paid, and that other Indians may also be settled east of the 96th degree, which is the land given the Cherokees for homes. The last treaty with this nation provides that this may be done, and it is an objectionable part to the Indians. The commission propose to abrogate this stipulation in connection with the sale. This latter tract, if allotted to the present claimants, would give them a trifle over 200 acres to each citizen; and a great proportion of it is unfit for cultivation.

While the placing of other Indians could be done should they abandon their tribal relations and be given land in different sections of the country, it cannot be done if the Indians persist in maintaining their tribal status, as there is not sufficient unoccupied land to allot 160 acres to each head, without interfering with the lands now under cultivation. Such settlement is only allowable by permission of the Cherokee, provided the President of the United States shall not declare the objections insufficient.

No small amount of speculation is indulged in as to the title pos-