

great fidelity in peace. The vacancy thus created was filled by the appointment of Hon. Warren G. Sayre, of Indiana.

A second conference between the commission and the Cherokees was begun November 6th, but no result has been yet obtained; nor is it believed that a conclusion can be made. The cattle syndicate occupying the lands for grazing purposes is clearly one of the agencies responsible for the obstruction of the negotiations with Cherokees. The large body of agricultural lands constituting what is known as the Cherokee outlet, cannot long be held for grazing, and for the advantage of a few against the public interests, and the best advantage of the Indians themselves. The United States has now under treaties certain rights in those lands. These will not be used oppressively, but it cannot be allowed that those who by sufferance occupy these lands shall interpose to defeat the wise and beneficent purposes of the government. I cannot but believe that the advantageous character of the offer made by the United States to the Cherokee nation for a full release of these lands, as compared with other suggestions now made to them, will yet obtain for it a favorable consideration.

Under the agreement between the United States and the Muskogee or Creek nation, or nations, on the 19th of January, 1888, an absolute title was secured by the United States to about three and a half million acres of land. Section 12, of the general Indian appropriation, approved March 2nd, 1889, made provision for the purchase by the United States from the Seminoles, of a certain portion of their land. The delegates of the Seminole nation having first duly evidenced to me their power to act in that behalf, delivered a proper release and conveyance to the use of all the lands mentioned in the act, which was accepted by me and certified to be in compliance with the statute. By the term of both the acts referred to all the lands so purchased were declared to be a part of the public domain and open to settlement under the homestead law. Part of the land embraced in these purchases, being in the aggregate about five and a half million acres, had already under the terms of the treaty of 1866, been acquired by the United States for the purpose of settling other Indian tribes thereon, and had been appropriated to that purpose. The land remaining and available for settlement consisted of 1,887,796 acres surrounded on all sides by lands in the occupancy of Indian tribes. Congress had provided no civil government for the people who were to be invited by my proclamation to settle upon these lands except as to the new Court, which had been established at Muskogee, or the United States court, in some of the adjoining states with power to enforce the general laws of the United States. In this condition of things I was quite reluctant to open the lands to settlement; but in view of the fact that the several thousand

persons, many of them with their families, had gathered upon the borders of the Indian Territory, with a view of securing homesteads on the ceded lands, and that delay would involve them in much loss, and suffering, I did on the 23d day of March last issue a proclamation declaring that the lands therein described would be open to settlement under the provisions of the law. On the 22nd day of April following, at 12 o'clock, noon, two land districts had been established, and the offices were open for the transaction of business when the appointed time arrived. It is much to the credit of the settlers that they very generally observed the limitation as to the time when they might enter the Territory. Care will be taken that those who entered in violation of the law do not secure the advantage they unfairly sought. There was a good deal of apprehension that the strife for locations would result in much violence and bloodshed; but, happily, these anticipations were not realized. It is estimated there are now in the Territory about 60,000 people, and several considerable towns have sprung up, for which temporary municipal governments have been organized. Guthrie is said to have now a population of 5000. Eleven schools and nine churches have been established, and three daily and five weekly newspapers are published in this city. The charter and ordinances have only the sanction of voluntary acquiescence of the people from day to day. Oklahoma is proportionately as well provided as Guthrie, with churches, schools and newspapers. Other towns and villages, having populations of 100 to 1000, are scattered over the Territory.

In order to secure the peace of this new community, in the absence of civil government, I directed General Merritt, commanding the department of the Missouri to aid in conjunction with the United States marshal to preserve the peace, and upon their requisition to use troops to aid them in executing warrants and quieting any riots or breaches of the peace that might occur. He was further directed to use his influence to promote good conduct and prevent a conflict among the settlers, and that the sale of liquors should be restrained. Regulations existed which would endanger the public peace, and in view of the fact that such liquors must first be introduced into the Indian reservations before reaching the white settlements; I further directed the general commanding to enforce the laws relating to the introduction of ardent spirits into the Indian country. The presence of the troops has given a sense of security to the well disposed citizens and has tended to restrain the lawless. In one instance the officer in immediate command of the troops acted further than I deemed justifiable in supporting the de facto municipal government of Guthrie, and he was so informed and directed to limit the interference of the military in the support of the marshals on the lines indicated in the original order. I very urgently recom-

mend that Congress at once provide a territorial government for these people. Serious questions, which may at any time lead to violent outbreaks, are awaiting the institution of courts for their peaceful adjustment. The American genius for self-government has been well illustrated in Oklahoma but it is neither safe nor wise to leave these people longer to the expedients which have temporarily served them.

ALASKA.

Provision should be made for the acquisition of titles to town lots in towns now established in Alaska, and for locating townsites for the establishment of municipal governments. Only the mining laws have been extended to the Territory, and no other form of title to lands can now be obtained. The general land laws were framed with reference to the disposition of agricultural lands and it is doubtful if their operation in Alaska would be beneficial.

We fortunately have extended to Alaska no mistaken policy of establishing reservations for the Indian tribes, and can deal with them from the beginning as individuals, with, I am sure, better results; but any disposition of public lands, and regulations relating to timber and the fisheries, should have a kindly regard to their interests. Having no power to levy taxes, the people of Alaska are wholly dependent upon the general government to whose revenues the seal fisheries make a large annual contribution. An appropriation for education should neither be overlooked nor stinted. The smallness of the population and the distance between settlements offer serious obstacles to the establishment of the usual territorial form of government. Perhaps the organization of subdistricts, with a small municipal council of limited power for each, would be safe and useful.

Attention is called in this connection to the suggestions of the Secretary of the Treasury relating to the establishment of another port of entry in Alaska and of other needed customs facilities and regulations.

LAND LAWS.

In the administration of the land laws the policy of facilitating, in every proper way, the adjustment of honest claims of individual settlers on the public lands, has been pursued. The number of pending cases heard during the preceding administration has been greatly increased under the operation of orders for a time suspending final action in a large part of the cases originating in the west and northwest, and by the subsequent use of unusual methods of examination. Only those who are familiar with the conditions under which our agricultural lands have been settled can appreciate the serious and often fatal consequences to the settler of a policy that puts his title under suspicion or delays the issuance of his patent. While care is taken to prevent and to expose fraud it should not be imputed without reason.

The manifest purpose of the homestead and preemption laws was to promote the settlement of the pub-