

Motion Presented by Iowa Senator J.B. Grinnell, February 5, 1867

Meskwaki Proclamation Day
A Historical Perspective
July 13, 1857

February 5, 1867

Mr. Grinnell. I move on page 42, after line one thousand and eight, to insert the following:

Provided, That the band of Sacs and Foxes now in Tama county, Iowa, shall be paid pro rata their proportion of annuity so long as they are peaceful and have the assent of the governor of Iowa to reside in that State.

Mr. Chairman, this proviso I desire to explain, and trust it will appear so manifestly just as to meet with no opposition. The Indians to whom this will apply are a band called Nussquokas, of the Sacs and Foxes, numbering some two hundred, with their lodges near the Iowa river, and about twenty miles from their own residence. On their removal near twenty years ago, to the reservation west of the Missouri river, a powerful band made war on them, and coming back to their old hunts declared that they would all be killed if they remained. Some ten years since, on their petition and that of their white neighbors to the State Legislature, they being in the senatorial district which I happened to represent, I took up their cause, and without objection a law was passed permitting them to own land and reside in the State. Their just portion of the annuity of the Sacs and Foxes was denied them until last year, when it was granted by Secretary Harlan, and is only given now as a temporary allowance by the present Commissioner of Indian Affairs. I see no good reason why it should not be permanent. I know of no other band which has not been decimated in numbers and suffered by the vices of the whites. Where they are without money they are objects of our charities. To compel them to go to Kansas is to settle them where they are not wanted or to provoke the murderous spirit of the warriors from whom they once fled. As to their character, of which I am asked, I have never heard that they were thievish or quarrelsome. They may have no Logan among their "braves." but with the pro rata of the annuity which I ask schools may be established, more comfort brought to their wigwams, and it is to be hoped such a Christian civilization as will not require the romance of a Jefferson or Seba Smith to find heroes worthy to adorn the sad history of our Indian tribes, which, without a change of policy, will soon be as far beyond our reach as they now seem below our consideration. (The Congressional Globe: Containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Second Session of the Thirty-Ninth Congress 1867.)