

tion of the nation for the office claimed by him, an office which by the Cherokee law the commissioners believed he did not in fact hold. They therefore refused, as commissioners representing the interests of the United States, to recognize Ross in any manner as the chief of the Cherokee Nation.

Loyal Cherokee will sign treaty conditionally.—At the same sitting of the council, Colonel Reese, of the loyal Cherokee delegation, declared that they were willing to sign the proposed treaty, but in so doing would not acknowledge that they had forfeited their rights and privileges to annuities and lands as set forth in the preamble, but that their signatures must be made under the following statement, viz.: " We, the loyal delegation, acknowledge the execution of the treaty of October 7, 1861, but we solemnly declare that the execution was procured by the coercion of the rebel army."

Southern Cherokees will sign treaty conditionally.— On the following day¹ the credentials of the Southern Cherokees were presented by E. C. Boudinot, accompanied by the statement that they cordially acceded to the 1st, 2d, 4th, 5th, and 7th propositions of the commissioners without qualification; that they accepted the abolition of slavery as an accomplished fact, and were willing to give such fact legal significance by appropriate acts of council. They insisted, however, that it would neither be for the benefit of the emancipated negro nor for that of the Indian to incorporate the former into the tribe on an equal footing with its original members. They were also opposed to the policy of consolidating all the tribes in the Indian Territory under one government, because of the many incongruous and irreconcilable elements which no power could bring into a semblance of assimilation.²

Southern Cherokees want a division of territory.—They had already proffered and were willing again to proffer the olive-branch of peace and reconciliation to their brethren of the so called loyal portion of the nation, but respectfully urged that after all the blood that had been shed and the intense bitterness that seemed to fill the bosoms of their brethren they ought not to be expected to live in an undivided country. They wished peace, and they believed they could have it in no other way than by an equitable division of the Cherokee country in such manner as should seem most appropriate to the United States.

Statement by John Ross.—The delegation of loyal Cherokees at the next session of the council³ presented their exceptions to the action of the commissioners in declining to recognize John Ross and that gentleman was permitted to make a statement in his own behalf. The constantly accumulating evidence against him was such, however, as to more fully confirm the commissioners in the propriety of their previous action.

¹ September 16, 1865.

²This objection to consolidation was afterwards withdrawn, and, based upon fuller information of the proposed plan, was most fully concurred in.

³ September 18, 1865.