

On the 21st of September the council adjourned, to meet again at the call of the Secretary of the Interior.

CONFERENCE AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

Early in 1866, in accordance with the understanding had at the adjournment of the Fort Smith council, delegations representing both factions of the Cherokees proceeded to Washington for the purpose of concluding some definite articles of agreement with the United States. They were represented by eminent counsel in the persons of General Thomas Ewing for the loyal and Hon. D. W. Voorhees for the Southern element. Many joint interviews and discussions were held in the presence of Commissioners Cooley, Parker, and Sells, but without any hopeful results. The bitterness exhibited in these discussions upon both sides gave but little promise that enmities of more than twenty years' standing could be subordinated to the demands of a peaceful and harmonious government. The Southern element, which numbered about sixty-five hundred, constituted but a minority of the whole nation. These, with the exception of perhaps two hundred, were still living in banishment among the Choctaws and Chickasaws, and felt it would be unsafe to return to their old homes with the Ross party in full possession of the machinery of government and ready to apply with severest rigor the engineery of their confiscation law. Their representatives were therefore instructed to demand, as the only hope for their future peace and happiness, a division of the Cherokee lands and funds in proportion to their numbers between the two contending parties.¹ On the other hand, the representatives of the Ross or loyal party insisted that there was no good reason existing why the Southern element should be unable to dwell harmoniously with them in the same country and under the same laws, which they asserted always had been and always would be impartially and justly administered, so far as they were concerned. A just feeling of national pride would always forbid their consent to any scheme against the integrity and unity of the whole Cherokee Nation. But, while they were thus on principle compelled to antagonize the demand of the Southern faction, yet if that element felt the impossibility of living comfortably in the midst of their loyal brethren the latter were willing that the portion of their national domain known as the Canadian district should be devoted to their sole occupation and settlement for a period of two years or until the President of the United States should deem it inadvisable to longer continue such exclusiveness.² To this again the Southern Cherokees refused assent,

¹ Statement of Southern delegation at an interview held with Commissioners Cooley and Sells, March 30, 1866. They also proposed that a census be taken and each man be allowed to decide whether or not he would live under the jurisdiction of the Ross party.

²Statement of loyal delegation at interview held with Commissioners Cooley and Sells, March 30, 1866.