

NUMBER XXIX.

Memorial to Congress for a Modification of the Pre-emption Law.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress Assembled. This Memorial of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Minnesota most respectfully represents: For modification
of Pre-emption
Law.

That a modification of the present Pre-emption Law, so as to enable the settlers to pre-empt one hundred and sixty (160) acres of land, in two separate parcels, is greatly needed, and, in order to a general settlement of the whole Territory, is imperatively demanded.

Your Memorialists beg leave to state that the unequal distribution of timber and prairie renders it impossible that both can be settled up in conformity to the existing pre-emption law, for the reason that the whole southern portion of Minnesota, at least, consists of large open tracts of prairie, with comparatively small bodies of timber. Hence, it is impossible that more than one tier of farms around such bodies of timber can be occupied in conformity to the spirit of the present law, for the want of the necessary timber to support such farms.

Your Memorialists would beg leave further to say that a large number of persons have settled upon these prairie lands, under the impression that there was a Territorial Statute law allowing them to take up their lands in two separate parcels, which would be sufficient for their protection. Under that impression they have gone on in good faith, builded their houses, and improved their farms, with a view to a permanent home for themselves and their families.

Now, after having settled in this new country, marked out and established routes for other emigrants to come after them, opened up the resources of the country—and after their homes have begun to assume the appearance of permanence and comfort, they find themselves in this predicament, viz: They must either abandon their homes, for which they have traveled far and sacrificed so much, or cultivate the open prairie without the necessary timber to do so; else be compelled to pay the ruthless speculator his exorbitant price for timber essential to their use.

Therefore your memorialists most respectfully ask your Honorable Body to so amend the existing pre-emption law as will enable settlers to pre-empt one hundred and twenty (120) acres of prairie land, forty (40) acres of timber land.

And your Memorialists will ever pray.

CHARLES GARDNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

JOHN B. BRISBIN,
President of the Council.

APPROVED—Feb. first one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six.

W. A. GORMAN.

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a correct copy of the original Memorial on file in this office.

J. TRAVIS ROSSER,
Secretary of the Territory of Minnesota.