A petition
for help to stop
taxation on the
Oneida Res
Mar 27, 1922

Oneidas Petition
To STOP Taxes on land

March 21 1922

Retype and Put
in Data Base

ONEIDA, WIS. March 27 1922

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C.

We, the undersigned, Oneida Indians of Wisconsin, respectfully represent as follows: We have been allotted under the Act of February 8, 1887, and under another Act of Congress it allowed the Indians to procure fee patents to their allotments if they applied for it and were recommended by the Agent to be competent to handle their own affairs. Through this channel fee patents were issued indiscriminately and which appears to have been with utter disregard as to the competency of the Indian who made the application as evidenced by his mode of living at the time and prior to the time that he entered his application and the manner in which he was parted from his allotment after he received his fee patent and in many cases before he received it. It appears that the Act allowing the issuance of fee patents prior to the twenty-five year period contained a provision to the effect that the Indian may procure payment for his land before he received his fee patent if he worked it through the representative of the Secretary of the Interior, or, the Indian Agent. We wish to say that this provision also was indiscriminately abused so far as the spirit of your honorable Office is concerned in making that provision. It was used to promote the interests of the land speculators who would and did seduce the ignorant Indians to go with them to the Indian Agent so that there would be an appearance of complying with the law regarding getting the permission of the Secretary of the Interior and the speculator would pay a certain sum so that the Indian may sign his fee patent over to the speculator as soon as the Agent procures it for him. When the fee patent comes the speculator goes and tells the Indian that his fee patent is at the Agent's Office and takes him over there and has him sign over to the speculator. Much of this signing over to a speculator has been done even without having been done through the Agent. The perpetration of these frauds is evidenced by the fact that probably as much as 95% of the lands sold immediately upon receipt of a fee patent has been sold to speculators who have made it a business to wrest the lands from the Indians through fradulent means and apparently aided by the Indian Agent as shown by the apparent disregard as to the competency of the Indian.

The Competency Commission visited the reservation reported the Indians as being quite competent to receive fee patents as the Commission traveled through the reservation and saw good houses, barns and stock but they saw the property of white people who live on lands owned by speculators or are paying for such lands on the installment plan an perhaps 90% of such whites are not "making good". Fee patents were issued through the recommendations