

LAPWAI, W. T., May 20, 1863.

I have intended writing to you before, but as nothing of particular importance has transpired, there has been nothing to communicate that would interest either you or your readers.

The Council has not yet commenced, having been delayed in various ways, waiting in part, for the assemblage of the Indians, of whom not more than about one-half are present, but who are continually coming in. The commissioners have also been waiting for the arrival of Col. Wallace, expecting by him to receive some additional instructions, and supposing that, as he is to be the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, *ex officio*, for the new Territory, he would probably be added to the Commission. In this expectation, however, they have been disappointed. Agent Hutchins, who is one of the Commissioners, has just arrived from Portland, where he had been waiting for some days in order to see Col. Wallace, and accompany him to this point.

It will require a few days yet to complete the necessary preparations, by which time it is supposed that the interpreter desired by the Indians will be here; a messenger having been despatched to Salem to bring him without delay. The Commissioners, anticipating the probability of a wish on the part of some of the Indians to have Mr. Whitman, who had been raised amongst them, and who is thoroughly acquainted with their language, as Interpreter—had endeavored to procure his services, for which they offered ample remuneration, besides paying all his necessary traveling expenses in going and returning. He however declined the offer, unless, in addition thereto, he could have the privilege of a permanent position, with which the Commissioners had nothing to do. Whether he will now come, is uncertain. If he does not, there are other interpreters here, who will be able to perform the work.

The only reason assigned by the Indians for wishing Mr. Whitman, was that they had some severe things to say, and they wanted the interpreter to say it as pointedly and as bluntly as they should speak it. They feared that Mr. Spaulding and Dr. Newell, who were not as thoroughly acquainted with the Nez Perce language as Perrin Whitman, would use softer terms, and besides, Mr. Spaulding was their teacher, and they did not wish him to be placed in a situation that might require him to use any harsh words from them, or from the Commissioners.

I am of the opinion that a change is going on now in the minds of the Indians, which will lead them to dispense with some of the bitter speeches they had thought of uttering. They had been told that the Commissioners

were going to take all their lands from them, and that the soldiers were there to drive them off, and remove them away. They are now learning that this is untrue, that the troops are here for their protection, and the abundant supply of agricultural implements which have been opened to their view, to be distributed to them, such as ploughs, harness, hoes, &c., convinces them that the Commissioners are not going to remove them without the bounds of their present reservation.

The old adage of "make haste slowly," frequently applies to matters of diplomacy, but in no case is it more applicable than in affairs of this sort with Indians. The unavoidable delay has been wisely improved by looking out a portion of their reservation, suitable for the settlement of the Indians, and by silently counteracting some of the injurious outside influences, which have been brought to bear upon the ignorance, the prejudice, the fears, the hopes and the dissensions of the tribe.

There is a strong secession element in the community, who have no desire to see a treaty made, but would prefer a difficulty with the Indians, for the sake of plundering them, and commencing a war of extermination. There are men of this class who have told the Indians that the Government is destroyed—that the Commissioners would not come—or if they did, their promises would be of no account, and advised them not to enter into any treaty. There are others who have their own selfish ends to accomplish, in the securing of some land or some privileges, who advise the Indians accordingly. If they were left to their own judgment, without so many interfering by injudicious advice, and by telling what is positively untrue, the difficulty in making a treaty would be much

less, and if the Commissioners fail, the blame must be laid at the door of these meddling traitors. It is due to many who reside at Lewiston and its neighborhood, to state that they have no sympathy with these movements, but anxiously desire that a treaty shall be made, which shall be honorable to the Government, beneficial to our people, and just to the Indians.

We have just received the news of the fall of Richmond. Should it prove true, its influence will be salutary here upon the Indians, and aid the Commissioners in their purposes. If it be untrue, and our army has met with a reverse, the result may be disastrous here.

We hope it is true, and trust that a treaty will be made.

This country will go ahead, and if the Rip Van Winklers on the Sound do not wake up, they will be left in the lurch. I learn from various sources that a very large number of the emigration of last year were desirous of going to the Sound, and would have gone, if there had been a wagon road across the mountains. I have reason to believe that if the road should be open in time this fall, several hundreds of the coming emigration will come right over to you. What is the state of the road through the Nisqually Pass? Is it progressing? Will it be open and passable this fall? Now is the time to strike, or you will find in another year that the Star of Empire has turned Eastward.

LAWYER.