

## THE INDIAN COMMISSION.

### GRAND COUNCIL WITH THE HOSTILE CHIEFS AT NORTH PLATTE.

#### Speeches of Commissioner Taylor, Spotted Tail, Swift Bear, Pawnee Killer, Turkey Foot and Big Mouth—Their Peremptory Demands—Gen. Sherman's Speech.

From Our Own Correspondent.  
NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA TERRITORY,  
Thursday, Sept. 19, 1867.

The grand and solemn council with all the circumstance of Indian etiquette, the hostile Chiefs of the Ogallalla, Brule, Sioux and Cheyennes, have been met, speeches have been made, decisive enough. There can be no mistake, no absurd guessing need be made as to what originated and created the Indian War on the Plains. Through their chosen representatives and spokesmen, Spotted Tail, Man Afraid of his Horses, Standing Elk, Pawnee Killer, Big Mouth, Star Eagle, Turkey Foot, Swift Bear and Black Bear, have the nations spoken. The speeches will be found interesting, and no correspondent can add to them mere worth by condensing them. They are plain and straight forward. From their very hearts they cry out "Stop those two roads—the Powder River Road and the Smoky Hill—and then you'll have life." Each and all sing the same song. A hard task lies before the Peace Commissioners. Will they accept the gage of battle so defiantly thrown down by the warriors, or will they succumb and accept the only terms that can alone bring peace on the Plains. These speeches made a profound impression upon the minds of the Commissioners, and as they are exceedingly interesting, I have sent a true copy of each. Swift Bear, as soon as the council was opened, spoke as follows:

"My friends, and all you Chiefs sitting here to-day, it shall be known all over the land what you say. It makes my heart glad to see you. We have a mode of making peace different to the whites. When we make peace we pray to the Great Spirit. We have no writings, but we keep our treaties, and pray to the Great Spirit to help us."

Commissioner TAYLOR then addressed the Chief as follows:

"My Friends—Your Great Father, whose heart is right, has heard of the troubles with his red children on the Plains. He has heard that there is war and that blood has been shed. He is opposed to war and loves peace. His heart is sad now. He has sent all these big chiefs to see you, to ascertain what is wrong. [Cries of "Ugh, ugh!"] You see here the great war-chief of old times (HARNEY.) Here is the great warrior (SHERMAN) who leads all the white soldiers on the Plains, and here are other chiefs. Here is a great peace-chief, (Senator HENDERSON,) who helps to make laws in the great council-chamber at Washington; and, last of all, your friend who speaks to you, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and the superintendent of all the Indian agents and traders on the Plains. [Cries of "Ugh, ugh!"] If the Great Father did not love you he would not send all these big chiefs to see you. We are sent out here to inquire and find out what has been the trouble with you. We want to hear from your own lips your complaints and grievances. My friends, speak fully, speak freely, and speak the whole truth. If you have been wronged, we wish to have you righted. We wish to hear you, and then the white chiefs will consider what you have said. We will have it all within a book and will not forget it. We will think it all over. We will deliberate over it, and will then speak our minds to you. Whatever is wrong we will make it right, and if you have done wrong you will make it right. War is bad; peace is good. We must choose good and not bad. Therefore, we are to bury the tomahawk and live in peace like brothers in our family. I await what you have to say.

#### SPEECH OF SPOTTED TAIL.

On the conclusion of Commissioner TAYLOR'S speech, SPOTTED TAIL arose and said:

You chiefs that are here to-day, and all you soldiers that are here, listen unto me, for there is no fun in what I have to say. My Great grandfather did not send you here for nothing, therefore we will listen unto you. He has made roads stretching east and west, the country in which we live is overrun by whites and all our game is gone. This is the cause of our troubles. We have no objection to this road, (U. P. R. R.) but I object to the Powder River and Smoky Hill roads. We all object to them. Let my Great grandfather know this—you can read and write—be sure and let him know this. I have always been a friend to the whites. I am now. The country across the river (Platte) belongs to the whites; this belongs to us; when we want game we want the privilege of going over there and kill it. I want these two roads stopped just where they are, or turned over to some other direction. We will then live peaceably together. I told that man (SANSBORN) last Spring that there was plenty of game in the country yet, and that the time had not come for us to go a-farming. When the game is gone I will then let him know. If you stop your roads we can get our game. There is a road up the river it belongs to us, (Brule Sioux;) the road on the Smoky Hill belongs to the Cheyennes. When we make friends, then we are friends, and we stick together. Give these men that are with me something good, and make their hearts glad. Give them something to wear, give them ammunition to kill game, by doing this you will make all the tribes feel good. I hope that you will trade with us, as before, that you will let the traders come to our camp. My friends, help us, take pity upon us. If you intend to make us presents, give them to us, and we will thank you. I have spoken.

After saying which he folded his blanket around him in a dignified manner, and resumed his seat in the sacred circle.

#### SPEECH OF THE "MAN THAT WALKS UNDER THE GROUND."

You see the coat I have on. It is my fine coat. You have fine coats on. Last Summer you gave me this (producing a permit) all my people have read it. I have listened to what you said. If you are true I will listen again. By holding this paper my children have suffered. Ever since I've been born I have eaten wild meat. My father before me did also eat meat from the ground. My arms are not long, but I can reach above my head. I will listen to your proposals for peace. These roads before the iron roads came scared away all the game. I want you to stop all these roads just where they are, the Smoky Hill and the Powder River. Tell your Great Father that our arms are long and shoulders broad, and we can almost reach to where he is. All the nation were brought up on this land, but the whites are very numerous, and if we can live in peace we will abide by what you say. Let our game alone. Don't disturb our game, and then you will have life. [Cries of "Helo, ugh."] All these people near the river are our friends and relatives. You asked me to-day what was the cause of our trouble. I have told you. Tell the Father this and let us know his plan. I am small, but I am a married man and have children. The game of this country is going away and we lack ammunition. I hope you will give us ammunition. Look at me. You have told me the truth. I have told you the truth also. I have said it."

#### SPEECH OF PAWNEE KILLER.

PAWNEE KILLER, whose name is well known to your readers as the chief who opposed HANCOCK, then spoke as follows:

"Who is our Great Father? What is he? Is it true that he sent you here to settle our troubles? There are not many of us here, but what there is here, we are not guilty of these troubles alone. The cause of our troubles is the Smoky Hill road running north and the Smoky Hill south. What little space of country there is left us between the Smoky Hill and Platte rivers; there is game there, and that is what we have to live upon. By stopping these roads I know you can get peace. If the Great Father stops the Powder River road, I know that your people can travel this road (Platte) without being molested, [Ha-ow-ugh.] If you tell us the truth, you ought to be able to furnish us with ammunition. I have seen you. I hope to be able to go back and sleep in peace. We have got little game, but we are out of ammunition and horses, but if you tell us the truth, you ought to be able to give us them. These people, the traders, take pity upon them, we want to get our trade back.

#### SPEECH OF TURKEY FOOT.

TURKEY FOOT, or Turkey Leg, the leader of the late Plum Creek raiders, next got up, and gave his speech as follows:

MY FRIENDS: You that are sitting here, are you chiefs? Is it true that the Great Father sent you here? Will the people that travel West listen to you, and do what you say? Will the Great Father himself listen to you? If you are chiefs, tell him to stop those two roads. If he will listen to you, tell him those roads are the causes of our troubles. All the people living in this country and along these rivers have intermarried with each other. They are all our flesh. I want you to let the traders come back; they are our friends.

#### SPEECH OF BIG MOUTH.

BIG MOUTH, who is next to SATANTA, the best orator on the Plains, and a friend to the whites, then spoke:

My friends and my people, open wide your ears and listen. North there are a great many Ogallallas. South there are Ogallallas. I stand between them; but I am strong and my shoulders are broad. I wish to succeed in making peace between the Ogallalla, Sioux and the whites. This day, you Gen. HARNEY, did the Great Father send you here? Do you tell the truth? As I am a chief, I hope that the Great Father sent you here. All you that are sitting here (turning to the Indian chiefs) be quiet. Leave the whites alone. What are you? The whites are numerous as the grass. What do you amount to? If the whites kill one of your warriors, you weep and feel sorrowful; but if you kill one of the whites, nobody cries for him. [Loud laughter from all hands.] That will do for my people, and now you whites, I speak to you. Stop that Powder Road; that is the cause of our troubles. The evil grows daily. It is just like setting fire to prairie grass. RED CLOUD and the MAN-A-FRAID-OF-HIS-HORSE had a talk with you last

Spring. Did you tell the Great Father what they said? Here are the Sioux on one side, and the Cheyennes on the other side, and after talking and talking, and listening to each other, you go and set the prairies on fire again. My Great Father told me, through men like you, that he would give 20 years' annuities for these roads. Where are they? I stand between two fires. [Cries of *Bastakelo, bastakelo*—ha-ow, how.] Give presents to these men, they have come from afar. I have a country up by Bear Creek, where a lone tree stands. It has my name carved upon it. That is my country, and I mean to keep it. Now I have done, and if you have anything to say we will listen.

Here the Council was adjourned till next day noon.

The demands of the Indians are peremptory. The cause of the Indian war may be seen by perusing the above speeches.

Sept. 20.—The Council met again, according to agreement, at noon. When silence was restored Commissioner TAYLOR got up and said: "We have heard your speeches, and after due deliberation have prepared an answer, which Gen. SHERMAN will give to you."

#### GEN. SHERMAN'S SPEECH.

Gen. SHERMAN then made the following speech:

Friends, we have heard your words, and have thought over them all night, and now give you our answer. You say that the Smoky Hill and Powder River Roads are the principal causes of your troubles. The Government supposed that the Cheyennes and Arapahoes agreed to give up that road four years ago, and ever since then it has been traveled by the whites. Military posts and mail stations were built there over two years ago, and these were not then considered a cause for war. Government thought that to build an iron road would be nothing more to you. To us it was more convenient and rapid, and it was necessary to our people in Colorado and New-Mexico, and the road will be built. We are to meet the Cheyennes next month (October) on the Arkansas, and if we find that the road is damaging to them we will make them compensation. But the roads will be built, and you must not interfere with them. The Powder River Road was built to furnish our men with provisions. No white settlements have been made along the road, nor does travel destroy the buffalo nor the elk nor the antelope. The Indians are permitted to hunt the buffalo as usual. The Great Father thought that you consented to give up the road—St. Laramie last Spring. But it seems that some of the Indians were not there, and have gone to war. While the Indians continue to make war upon the road, the road will not be given up. But if, on examination at Laramie in November, we find that the road hurts you, we will give it up or pay you for it. If you have any claims, present them to us at Laramie. You also ask us presents, more especially powder and lead to hunt buffalo. We will give you some presents because you have come up here to see us; but we will not give you much till we come to a satisfactory agreement. We cannot give you now powder and ball, because very recently you killed white people—innocent emigrants. Some of you attacked a train, and killed people with no arms in their hands, who were carrying provisions to whites and Indians. To SPOTTED TAIL, STANDING ELK, TWO STRIKE, SWIFT BEAR and bands we are willing to give them almost anything they want because they have remained at peace all Spring and Summer. But the rest of you must work with your bows and arrows till you satisfy us you will not kill our people. This answers all that question. We now give you advice. We know well that the red and white men were not brought up alike. You depend upon game for a living, and you get hats and clothes from the whites. All that you see white men wear they have to work for. But you see they have plenty to eat—that they have fine houses and fine clothes. You can do the same, and we believe the time has come when you should begin, and we will give you assistance. You can own herds of cattle and horses like the Cherokees and Chocaws. You can have cornfields like the Poncas, Yanktons and Fortowatomies. You see for yourself that the white men are collecting in all directions, in spite of all you can do. The white men are taking all the good land. If you don't choose your homes now, it will be too late next year. This railroad up the Platte and the Smoky Hill Railroad will be built, and if you are damaged we must pay you in full, and if your young men will interfere, the Great Father, who, out of love for you, withheld his soldiers, will let loose his young men, and you will be swept away. We therefore propose to let the whole Sioux Nation select their country on the Missouri River, embracing the White Earth and Cheyenne Rivers; to have their land like the white people forever, and we propose to keep all white men away, except such agents and traders as you may choose. We want you to cultivate your land, build houses and raise cattle. We propose to help you then as long as you need help. We will also teach your children to read and write like the whites. The Cheyennes and all Southern Indians shall have similar homes in the country below the Arkansas, and if the Sioux Indians prefer to go down there, they can enjoy the same privileges. A great many treaties have been made by people gone before us. We propose to stand by them, but I am afraid they did not make allowances for the rapid growth of the white race, and you can see for yourselves that travel across the country has increased. The slow ox-wagons do not answer white men; we build iron roads, and you cannot stop the locomotives any more than you can stop the sun or moon, and you must submit and do the best you can; and if any of you want to travel east to see the wealth and power of the whites you can do so and we will pay your expense. Our people East hardly think of what you call war here, but if they will make up their minds to fight they will come out here as thick as a herd of buffalo, and if you continue fighting you will all be killed. We advise you for the best. We now offer you this: To choose your own homes and live like the white man, and we will help you all you want. We are doing more for you than we do for other white men coming from over the sea. This Commission is not only a Peace Commission but it is a War Commission also. We will be kind to you if you keep the peace, but if you won't listen to reason we are ordered to make war upon you in a different manner from what we have done before. We will be here again in November, until which time you can hunt on the republican. Then you must meet us again. Then we shall want to know whether you are willing to go up next Spring to White Earth or down on the Arkansas. We will feed you till Spring on Brady Island. We advise you to go as near as possible to the Missouri River, as you can get your provisions much cheaper than you can get them away from the river. Think of these things now. We want to hear your reply, but we don't propose to make final agreement till the 1st of November. That's all.

There can be nothing plainer than Gen. SHERMAN'S speech, and it had visible effect upon his audience. The sequel will show whether he made good his word.

SHERMAN was followed by Commissioner TAYLOR and Senator HENDERSON in much the same vein.

The Indians made reply to the Commissioners, that they had come to the council, as invited, to make peace; at least, so they understood it. Was it fair to send them back empty handed, having done nothing but talk. They asked for ammunition to kill game. They said they would not hunt the white men; did not want to.

SPOTTED TAIL, SWIFT BEAR, TURKEY LEG and PAWNEE KILLER were spokesmen.

The Commissioners finally yielded and peace was declared between the Brule, Ogallalla and Cheyennes. PAWNEE KILLER left the council in disgust before peace was made. He hurried to his wigwam, painted his face a deep red, and mounting his pony galloped away over the sand bluffs. Thus the grand council was ended. Powder and ball will be distributed to the chiefs to-morrow, also blankets and cloth. The Commission will now take a recess, and meet again with the southern Indians at Fort Larned on the 13th of next month. Till then, *au revoir*.