

pitched herd by the camp of the Dominion troops, but after a brief interview with the commissioners, the Indians, one and all, so strongly objected to reassemble anywhere upon ground claimed by the Hudson's Bay Company, that it was removed to a rising ground indicated by themselves, between their own camp and the Company's fort, and it was there they met the commissioners in Council.

As to the manner. Shortly before the hour appointed, a bugler from the troop, accompanied by an interpreter or guide, made the rounds of the Indian camp, blowing a call at the Council Lodge of the Indians and other prominent points; after which, did the Indians incline to meet that day—not otherwise, and there were many lapses—they, with every deliberation and in detached parties, moved across the plain, singing or not, as might be, and advanced in a body to the marquee, seating themselves inside, on the ground—the Otchipwes on the one side and the Crees on the other. It may be said here that the negotiations were on the part of both conducted almost entirely by the Otchipwes, most of the Crees being at the hunt. Singularly enough, and at as early a day as the Selkirk Treaty, the Otchipwes asserted a prominence; commenting upon which the late Alexander Ross, a veteran trader, and author of several works upon the country,\* says: "The country has always, within the memory of man, been known to belong to the Crees and the Assiniboines. The Otchipwes were always looked upon as intruders, and so much were the Crees offended by their participating in the Treaty, that they menaced the settlers that they would reclaim their lands unless the Otchipwes were struck off." He adds, "that during the trouble between the rival Companies, these people were brought in by the 'Nor-West' as trappers and hunters, and made their first appearance about 1780, from the lake country, and that some of the signers of the Selkirk Treaty were pushed forward by the traders, being held in no consideration by their own people."

At this day they are found in all the Plain country east of the mountains, from Edmonton to the Cypress Hills, from the Saskatchewan to the line—a people whose push and

vitality asserts itself wherever they are found. There was, I think, the same resentment of feeling at this as at the Selkirk Treaty. The Crees, however, met them in their prior conferences, though counselling apart; and it is due to the fact of the Crees being willing to treat that the delays attending the Treaty were brought so suddenly to an end. As a matter of fact, it was quite immaterial to the Commission who claimed the land; the extinguishment of all Indian title being their aim, and an equality of terms to all present the result.

To return to the council tent. There were a few soldiers placed near the commissioners, the bulk being nigh at hand, outside, among the motley group of Indian men, women, and children, half-breeds, traders, &c., &c.

I suppose most know that the Indians determine in their own councils upon not only their chiefs and chief men—or soldiers, as they are sometimes called—but also their mouthpiece or speaking man, who is instructed merely to convey their thoughts, but not to determine or initiate. They confirm him, as he speaks, by marks of assent; or if he is going in a way they do not like, some elderly man will quietly rise, take him by the arm, and lead him to his place—a parliamentary usage, by the way, which could be frequently introduced with great effect among some of the Legislative Assemblies of the present day. They exercise much care in the selection of their leaders, who are presented by one of their number giving their names and functions. It is not essential, I may add, that their orator should be a chief, or man of rank; he is chosen for his aptitude, and is sometimes replaced by another, as was the case at this Council. Points arising are reserved and considered by themselves in consultation in the soldiers' lodge.

Waiving details, I proceed to the impediment which at once arose, *i. e.* the feeling of hostility to the Hudson's Bay Company. In brief (although it occupied much time, and called for tact and patience), the Indians said: "A year ago these people [the Company] drew lines, and measured and marked the lands as their own. Why was this? We own the land; the Manitou [or Great Spirit] gave it to us. There was no bargain; they stole from us, and now they steal from you [this was not said in reference to the one

\* "Fur Hunter," "Columbia," and "Red River Settlement."