

Speeches of Little Elk
& White Crow (Winnabago
chiefs) to His Excellency
Gov. Forter, Nov. 8. 1852-
as taken down and reported
by Snodden, Sub Agent.

1
Memo^r of a Talk held with the Winnebagoes
at Fort Winnebago, Nov. 8th 1832—

Little Elk, a Winnebago Chief, addressed His Excel-
lency, Governor Porter, as follows:

Father,

I have been selected by my nation, here present,
to say a few words to you, that it may reach the ears
of our Great Father at Washington. We have been ad-
vised by our Father, (Mr Kingle) to remain quiet—but
some of our young people have not done so—we are
ashamed of it, and our Father is also. About 4 years
ago, I saw our Great Father at Washington—he pointed
out to us a good road, and we (of the Ouisconsin & Fox
rivers) remained in that road. There are two bands
in this nation—the Rock River band and Ouiscon-
sin band. The former did not go to Washington to
see our Great Father and to hear his words—therefore
did not take the right road—they were the ones who
did wrong. When we went to Washington to see our
Great Father, he there told us that we should be
mixt with the whites. He then, at our request appoin-
ted our friend here (Mr Kingle) our Agent. We have
found his words true—he has always given us good
advice. Since I have heard my Great Father's words,
they have ever been in my mind, and in the minds
of those of Fox and Ouisconsin bands. No one can
say otherwise than they have behaved well during all

last summer. Since the Sacs and Foxes have been destroyed we examined into the conduct of all our young men. They all showed us a clean hand, and a clear heart. I hope therefore that the conduct of the tribes I represent may be made known to our Father the President - that he may take pity upon us, his red children, and alleviate our miserable conditions. We want assistance in the way of provisions.

All our corn has been destroyed during the past summer. Our only hope for the present is the chase game is scarce, but I hope we will be able to make out to live, till our Great Father can render us his aid.

Had it not been for Black Hawk and Proph-
et, the Rock River band would not have been engaged in staining our land with the blood of the whites. It was some of their young men, who were related to the Sacs, that have caused all this trouble to our nation. Not long since we received a message from a Great War Chief (Gent Scott), to attend at Rock Island. We went thither immediately. He told us that he had just come from the far East, and had been sent by his Great Father the President. He examined into our conduct and said he was pleased with our band's behaviour. He mentioned that some of our nation had taken up the hatchet against our friends the whites - and that we must tell the truth about it, and tell him their names.

Before we left this place for Rock Island, we heard that some of our young men of Rock River had behaved badly. As we had always delivered up our bad young men when required by the whites

I thought it would not be right to do otherwise now. After we had complied with his wishes, he then told us that he wanted our land. He said that at the treaty of Prairie du Chien, a line had been drawn between us and the whites - that it was our fault if they came over it - that he wanted to make a stronger line, one that the whites would not go over. He did so and if they go over this line, no line will stop them. He said that he was well pleased - that he had mentioned two words to us and that we did as he desired. He told us that our Father here, Mr Kingle, would soon pay us our money and more next year. When at Rock Island, there were three claims presented against us. Our Father (Scott) said he would see it paid. We thought that the money we should get, would be paid to us - but the whites want it all. They come to our Father here (Mr K.) with long papers to take all our money. When we had no money, they never troubled us with their ugly papers. When I saw my Great Father at Washington, he told us how much money we should draw - he never mentioned to us anything about claims. He advised us to make good use of our money. Even some of our traders here are digging up old claims, made by our Grand Fathers. I wonder what they think we are to do. We have but little and that little they want, and to starve us. We have been waiting for some time here for our money, and our traders have also. We may lose all our fall hunts, in consequence of it, and we will not perhaps reach our wintering grounds.

The time has now past for laying up our winter's supply of provisions. Had it not been for our Father here (Mr Kingie) who has fed our Women and children, and for a part of the 60,000 rations due us by the late treaty which has been given to us, we should have starved. I hope Father, that you will tell our Great Father the President, our condition, and for him to take pity upon us his red children in the spring - it is then we will want his support in provisions most. We want corn. I wish to mention another thing to you. The Indians at Prairie du Chien (about 500 souls) receive as much Tobacco and Salt, as the Rock River bands and ours (about 3,800 souls) - Why is this. I think it ought to be divided equally. I hope it will be different hereafter. Our manner of living is different from the whites. You have good houses and good living - we have no such houses, and we have to hunt for our living.

White Crow of Rock river spoke as follows: -
Father,

I have a few words to say to you Father - I hope you will listen to me. I look upon you as our great maker. Ever since I can remember I have followed the advice of the whites. I am in a very bad situation as also our band - we have waited here long. Our American Father has been a great while trying to purchase our lands, but we always told him we would not sell, unless the whole nation would consent. Some years ago we sold a piece of land because he told us we would be a great deal better off than ever we were before. But ever since we have been

worse off, than we were before we sold any of our land. This spring when the snow went off the Laes and Foxes came to us and said they were going to raise the war club against the whites, and wished to persuade us to join them. We said we could not, because we considered ourselves Americans. I soon after went down Rock River, with this man who has been our Father and adviser (Mr Gattisto) and we got to the American War Chiefs (Atkinson's) Camp, and he told us to drive the Laes back. But we could not - they wanted to bloody our land. When he (Atkinson) saw we could not get them off our Land, he advised us to leave our land - to go away from our Country and to keep out of his way. We said we could not do that as we had nothing to eat. He then said we should eat whatever we found in our Country in the way of Cattle, Hogs &c, but we told him we could not so, as there would be claims enough presented against us by the whites at our payment. We thought it was only us that was foolish - that could tell lies, but I find that some of your whites are as good at it as many of our young men. Many of the whites are as bad as we are. They took all our Corn and many articles as they passed our villages, and have even taken up the dead that were buried, and took off the blankets &c in which they were wrapped. Their conduct in this particular, Father, has hurt the feelings of many of ^{our} young men. I have been told by some of the white Chiefs that as soon as the Truce would be over, we should be recompensed for our losses - for the Corn & other things destroyed for us. I am looking for something to eat hereafter from our Great

Father the President - if we should not ^{get something} we shall certainly lose half of our nation. We have been too far from our Father here (Mockingie) - We had only this one (Mr Gratiot) to look to, and if something is not done for us we will be in a very bad situation. I still hold him fast by his hand. He has done too much for us, before he was appointed agent for me to forget him. Things of that kind are not easily forgotten, and that is the reason, I say I shall hold him by the hand. If any of our young men do wrong I am always ready to deliver them up to the whites. - As I have said I always listen to your words and those of our Great Father the President. If any of our boys are in your hands now, it is the fault of the Sacs. Before they came into our country we lived happily and peaceably. But as soon as they got into our land, they led some of our foolish boys wrong, and tore our country to pieces. A great many lies have been told on these boys, who are now in the Fort. If I knew they were engaged in murdering I would with great pleasure give them into your hands. As they have been suspected of murdering I have given them up in that way. I hope they will be better treated while in your hands, than they have been. They are badly off for clothing - they are freezing to death. - They are only suspected, and until they are found guilty, they should not be treated as if they wished their death. If they are found guilty I will not say a word. But as it is they suffer greatly. There will be a great many of their

friends near here who will supply them with fresh meat,
and I hope they will allow us to give it to them. If our
Great Father the President intends to do any thing
for us in the way of Corn, we would wish our Father
Mr Gratiot to have it, so that we can get it when we
call for it. -

Address of Gov. Porter
to the Winnebago Nation
in Council at Fort Win-
nebago. Nov. 8. 1832 -
as taken down, and reported
by Jno. H. Kimpie, Sub Agent.

My Children!

I have listened with great attention to what you have said. I had come a long distance to hear and learn what your situation and condition were, and to see all your people. I regret, however, to find that we have not a clear sky - a bright sun, for our Council. The smoke of happiness and the comforts of peace have forsaken you. The great Spirit is displeased. I have had several councils lately some beyond these great Lakes - and several with the Menomones, and Ojibwas here while at Green Bay. At all these, on each Council day, the sky was clear, the sun bright, and the weather fine. Why is it that the Great Spirit is not equally propitious here? You know the cause. After all the kindness of your Great Father - disregarding his Councils and advice you have behaved badly - not the whole of your Nation but some of them. And after all the clemency and mercy extended to you by your Great Father, and the great War Chief he sent among you, still you hesitate in doing right. You have, in consideration of his forgiveness, promised to surrender and deliver up all among you, who were in any way concerned in the murder of our white men - You have not yet done so - Is it any wonder then that the Great Spirit is displeased

with you? Your Great Father, the President of the United States, has great reason to be angry with you. But he pities you. He always speaks the Truth. And he will be much dissatisfied with any of his red children, who tell a Lie. You have promised to deliver up all those of your Nation, who were acting badly - you have not done so. You cannot expect that the Great Spirit will be appeased - that your Great Father's heart will be softened, until you can come in with clear hands, and tell the whole truth - until you deliver up, not only the man you promised to bring in, but also the one we have heard of and all others whom you know to have been in any way concerned in the outrages committed on our Citizens. Bring them all in and thus exculpate yourselves. Each one of you, who is innocent, should feel an interest in the surrender of the Guilty. You are right in supposing that these men who have been committed should not be considered guilty until proved to be so. This is the rule of your great Father - Every one is presumed innocent, until found guilty. Your men shall have a fair trial - I shall rejoice if they can satisfy us that they are innocent. They would in that event be given up to you, and you would receive them among you as good men. But when I say this, do not understand me that we intend letting them

go clear, if they be found guilty. Justice will require that they shall be punished as they deserve. The blood of our unoffending citizens cries aloud for vengeance - Those who are guilty must not expect to escape. -

You say that your young men who are in prison are suffering with cold - that they have no blankets - I will attend to this. I shall go and see them and take with me your Father (pointing to Mr Hingie) and also the agent and Father of your small band (Mr Gratiot) and I shall take measures for bettering there condition, if I find what you say is correct. Whatever you wish to give them, from time to time must be done through your father here (Mr H.) You must not trouble the officers at the fort, but come to him, and whatever is right you should do, your Father will have done according to your wishes. Remember what I say to you.

The fate of these men in prison should lead you to reflect and consider the consequences of such bad conduct - How was all this brought about? Let me tell you. Some years ago your nation behaved badly. Some of your men at least did so. You were filled with vanity and self conceit. Because your Great Father the President, did not at once, send a great band of Warriors to chastise you, to cut you to pieces, you vainly imagined he had not a sufficient force to punish you. He judged your weakness - he disregarded your folly. And for the purpose of convincing you of your errors he sent for you, and invited your Chiefs and head men, to

go to Washington to see him. The first Chief who spoke (Little Elk) was among those who went on - I saw him there and know the good advice he received from his Great Father. He saw with his own eyes, the great number of Warriors his Great Father had and how vain it would be for the Minnebaques to attempt to contend with them. On his return he told his people, (many of you who are present heard it) all he saw & heard; and I am pleased to find that so many of you have profited by it. But, although invited, none of the Rock River band would go to Washington. They did not believe what was told them, by those who went in 1828 - turned a deaf ear to the good advice sent to them by their Great Father. They now see the effect of such conduct. By refusing to take good advice evil came upon them. They forgot all the kindness which had been extended to them, and took bad advice from the Sacs. Had they any cause for doing so? Certainly not.

You all know that after the Treaty of Prairie du Chien, your great Father faithfully fulfilled all the stipulations on the part of the Government of the United States. Your money was sent to you regularly - you got your Tobacco and Salt - Blacksmiths were provided, who did all your work, you had no cause of complaint.

When the Sacs behaved wrong and made war upon our white people, your Great Father sent his war Chiefs and Warriors to chastise them. One of his great War Chiefs, Gent Scott, was also sent among

them and you all know what followed. Where are these poor deluded Sacs and Foxes now? Look at their fate and learn wisdom from it - Their Chiefs and War Chiefs are our prisoners - their women and children are rendered miserable. Your Great Father has been informed that some of you Winnebagoes were concerned with these Sacs - He directed this great War Chief to inquire whether this were true. Your Father here (Mr Kingie) and the Father of the Rock River Band (Mr Gratiot) were instructed also, to inquire into the matter. Some of you behaved honestly and well, - came forward and told the truth - and when all was found out you obligated yourselves, in the Treaty with Gen Scott, to deliver them up - You have not yet done so - you must do so - or you cannot as I have already said expect that your troubles will cease.

You complain that you have had to wait a long time for your money, and that you have suffered much in consequence of the delay - that you have lost your hunting season. I regret to say, it is all your own fault, and you should feel very thankful that you are allowed to have it, even at this late period of time. Your Great Father would have been fully justified in refusing to let you have one dollar.

Let me explain this to you. When you made the Treaty at the Prairie you promised to behave yourselves well - that you would not permit any of your people to make war upon the White man, or to kill them.

In consideration of these fair promises you were to get

money ~~you~~ When therefore you proved faithless can you have any right longer to receive this money? Certainly not. Your Great Father had sufficient cause to drive you away and to stop the payment of your annuity. But he pitied. He loved you. He knew there were many good men among you, who obeyed his instructions and remembered the good advice he gave you. His heart was softened, and he did not think it right that because some of your young men behaved badly, all of you should be punished. He would not however send the money to you, until the necessary examination was made and it was discovered who were in fault and who were innocent. He was determined that no money should be paid to those who were concerned in any way with the Sacs. Your Father here (Mr King) was instructed not to pay any of these bad men or their families. They must not therefore be displeased with him. Their great Father has so directed it and it must be done. Neither they nor their families can have any of the money brought here. As soon then as we heard from your Father here that you were willing to obey the call of the Great War Chief (Gen Scott) and to go to see him at Rock Island and there enter into an engagement to surrender up those who were suspected of committing the murders and misdemeanors which he had heard of, the money was made ready for you at Detroit, and your friend the Chippewas (Major Forsyth) and I made preparations for bringing it

hither. But even then it seemed as though the Great Spirit were displeased. - For twelve days the winds blew so much that the vessel in which we were to sail, could not get from Cleveland to Detroit. After it reached there, and while we were on board, on our passage to Green Bay, storms - thunder and lightning, retarded our progress - Why was this so? - You must see that there was something wrong - You cannot hope that all will be right until you come forward and tell the whole truth, and surrender the guilty, who are among you. The money is now here and your Father may pay it to you tomorrow. But remember this is done, on the promise which you now make that you will at once bring in those two men and any others you know to be guilty. This then should satisfy you - It shows you the goodness of your Father (the President) in letting you have the money this year after you have given him so much trouble. But besides this, his Great War Chief has made a Treaty with you upon the most fair, liberal and generous terms. - He has treated you better than you deserved. He has shown you that he is not only a great War Chief, but a very good man. I have examined the Treaty which he made with you. It is all right. Behave yourselves well and you will receive lasting benefits from it. Your money will come regularly to you as heretofore and all that is stipulated by this Treaty will be fulfilled. This War Chief acted under the directions of your Great Father who never speaks to his red children with a forked tongue. He told you the truth

when he said a line was now run between you and the white man, that no one could step over. That the road would now be clear and that you would be comfortable and happy if you followed his advice.

In regard to your necessities, which have caused him to issue, for your present subsistence, a considerable part of the rations which by the Treaty were to be delivered to you next Spring: and your request that others may be provided for you by that time I can only add that the whole matter will be communicated to your Great Father, and I hope he may be enabled to grant your request. I shall recommend it to his particular attention. If possible too, the attempt will be made to get some Corn for you by Spring, and should it be procured, of course the Band under Mr Gratiot will receive their just proportion, as they have requested, through the last Speaker (White Crow).

There is it seems to me some injustice done you, in the distribution of the Tobacco and Salt provided for in the Treaty. Your remarks are entitled to much weight, and I shall endeavour to have justice done you - It pleases me to find that you pay so much attention to your own interests - Whenever any thing is not right you must speak of it to your Father here (Mr King) and he will attend to it. Your Great Father would not willingly wrong you. But he is a great way off. He has many agents, and they may sometimes make a mistake. But whenever it is pointed out it

affords him pleasure to rectify it.

There is a request which you make that is unreasonable and it cannot be granted - You ask that your Great Father should pay the claims which are presented for depredations committed by your people - for articles they have got and the like, and that these claims may not be deducted from your annuity. This would be all wrong. If one of you injure the property of another justice requires that you should pay for it. But is there any sense in supposing that your Great Father would pay for your bad Conduct? If you behave well - act uprightly - you will have no occasion to pay for any claim of this kind. So, as to claims for articles you have received or which you have purchased. You have got full value for the money they demand, and every principle of honour and honesty requires that you should pay it. In all matters of this kind you should tell the truth. It is the duty of your father here (Mr. Stinger), to receive these claims when handed to him, and to present them to you. If you know them to be right, you should admit them at once. You cannot expect to prosper if you are dishonest - It is dishonest to refuse to pay a just claim - one that you know is correct. On the other hand if an unfounded claim be presented, it is your duty to refuse to allow it - But you must not be displeased with your father here for making inquiry with respect to a claim of this kind, or any other as I have already said it is his duty to do so.

In presenting it to you, however, you must not understand that he advises you to pay in every case - He never will urge you to allow a claim which he believes unjust. I would be better pleased with you if you would place implicit confidence in your Father here. You know how honest and true he is to you and your interests. Some if you went to Washington under his care and the care of your friend the Chippewa (Maj. Forsyth).

Last summer, if you recollect, as now you wished to persuade us that you were our friends, and could show us a "clean hand" - innocent of any participation with or knowledge of the intentions of the Sacs. - You solicited at that time an interview with the Chippewa. He, with your father here, both of whom are well known to you, as your warm friends, met you in Council. That you then requested the Chippewa to tell me, your Father at Detroit, all you said. That you held me tight by the hand, and desired your Father here to put your words down on paper, that your friend the Chippewa, might carry it to me. He told me all he and your Father had said, and I received by him the paper containing your talk. I am sorry to say now that you have not behaved rightly - that you did not tell them all you knew, but have deceived them. Had you then told the truth, the Great Spirit would not have got angry with you and placed you in your present troubles. Your women

and children would not, as they now are, have been suffering for want of something to eat. All this will be a good lesson to you, and teach you hereafter always to tell the truth. How do you expect to be treated by the whites after telling so many big lies? they will treat you like Dogs until you learn to behave better. I expect to visit this country again next year, and I hope your father here will have it in his power to render me a good account of your behaviour, and of your disposition to be good hereafter.

I have one more word to say to you and that is about Whiskey. If you look back upon your past conduct up to this time, you will find that whiskey has caused more sorrow to your nation than the greatest enemy you have had to contend with. It is the poison of the Red man, and so long as you permit it to come into your country, so long will you always be in trouble. Throw whiskey aside, behave well, and your nation will prosper.

I now hold you fast by the hands, and I hope the words which I have spoken to you will go into your ears and never come out again.