

## CHIEF MOSES DAY DAYBWAY-WAINDUNG.

ALBERT B. REAGAN

While Indian Agent at Nett Lake, Minnesota, I met Chief Moses Day, known to the Indians by the name of Daybway-waindung, and found him to be a man of marked character. He had his faults as we all have. Also on account of his not being educated he was sometimes "worked" by disgruntled persons. But whatever his mistakes, his aim was good.

Mr. Day is not only the head chief of the Bois Fort Indians but is also their chief medicine man. His will is law. He regulates and orders their every business move. He tells them when to gather their rice and when not to cut it. He tells them when to plant and when to gather their crops. He orders their dances and medicine ceremonies. And it is also alleged that he holds them under his influence by threats of sending them to the land of fogs and storms in the hereafter, if they do not obey him.

Mr Day came into prominence in the eighties of last century when he usurped the chieftainship of the Bois Fort Indians from Misquahgeshig, who was the direct line chief but was not suited for a chief. Later at the signing of the Sucker Point (Tower, Minn.) Agreement of 1899, he was one of the chief speakers. Here he showed his ability and also showed that he would leave nothing undone for the benefit of his people. His talk on that occasion was as follows (taken from the minutes of the meeting):

"Mr. Commissioner, about Nett Lake, where I live—there is where I was born—there is any amount of rice which never fails me and my people. We wish the commissioners to use their influence so that no dam shall ever be built below that will overflow what we depend on for subsistence. There is a place where we can take all the timber to the Little Forks of the Rainy Lake River. I wish to state that the whites have no respect for the reservation whatever. When the Indians were here three years ago, the last time we received anything from the Government, we told them there was a road going through the reservation, where the timber is piled up and going to waste, and, although we made a complaint to the agent, nothing has ever been done about it.

"The agent was never at our reservation. No, never at any time. There is a creek inside the reservation; that is where the lumbermen come without permission and help themselves to all the hay there. You can not imagine how the white men help themselves to anything on the reservation. Even our canoes they take from us without asking.

"The agent just hurries here (to Tower) and hurries right back, without giving us any attention. It would take me all day to put in complaints that can be substantiated.

“The chiefs who went to Washington and concluded a treaty with the Government saw that arrangement fulfilled only once, when they went to Fond du Lac for payment. After that it looked as if something was being stretched out, and the end failed to reach us. They told us in Washington that they would clothe these men here so they would be proud of their clothes.

“We wish to know about the children who will be born to our people after this agreement is signed; what is to become of them, and what interest or benefit shall they receive, if they are not enrolled? I wish an answer.

“At what time do you suppose the survey of our reservation will be made? We wish it made soon. We do not understand the English language, and would like to have a man connected with the survey who can speak our tongue.



Chief Moses Day.

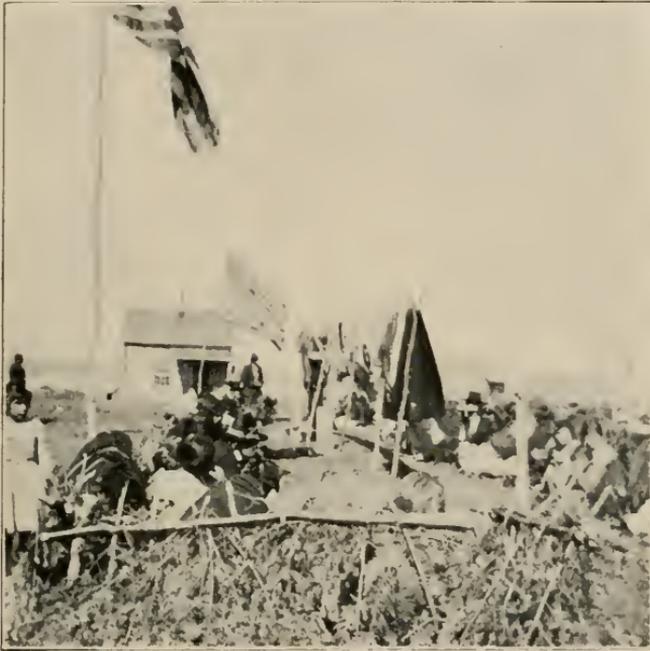
“We are now ready to proceed with the business of signing this Agreement.”

He then touched the pen handed him by the commissioners (continue the minutes), and was followed by the other chiefs and members of their respective bands.

After the signing of the Agreement of 1889, the Bois Fort Indians still remained under the jurisdiction of the LaPointe (Wisc.) Indian Agency, some 300 miles away. Mr. Day maintained that an agent to be of any benefit to the Indians should live on their reservation. On account of his constant clamoring, the agency was finally moved to Sucker Point (Tower, Minn.) sixty miles from Nett Lake, the home of the Bois Fort Indians and the site of their reservation. Undaunted, the old chief began his demands anew

for an agency to be established on the Bois Fort Reserve, and in 1907, he went to Washington with Interpreter Rev. Frank H. Pequette and after a lengthy talk with the Honorable Commissioner of Indian Affairs, he was promised an agency at Nett Lake, and, in compliance with that promise, the agency was established there under Mr. Thomas J. Jackson in the spring of 1908.

Having gained the first demand, Mr. Day commenced to try to get the Bois Fort treaty with the Government of 1866 carried out. In this treaty



among other things, the Government promised the Indians that eight houses would be built on the Bois Fort Reserve for the chiefs and that a sawmill, carpenter shop and blacksmith shop would be installed there and kept in operation. The eight houses were built, but at Farmer John's Landing on Pelican Lake, nine miles east of Nett Lake, and no sawmill or shop of any sort was furnished; the only possible explanation why the houses were built at Pelican Lake and not at Nett Lake in that the contractors were too lazy to go to Nett Lake to build them. Mr. Day maintained that the houses were not built on the reserve and consequently did not fulfill the treaty stipulations. For years he kept up his clamoring till not only did the gov-

erment build eight houses on the reservation for the chiefs, but an additional fourteen houses for the aged and indigent Indians of the tribe, and in 1914 he secured the carpenter shop, blacksmith shop and sawmill.

Another thing which Mr. Day has concerned himself about is our relations with England. When the treaty of 1783 was signed at Paris the boundary between the United States and Canada from Lake Superior to the Lake of the Woods was placed along the main watercourse of the Rainy Lake, Rainy River route and the main tributary coming into Rainy Lake from the east. Then when the survey and adjustment was made, a lesser stream north of the main eastern tributary was made the boundary, the Indians maintain. Mr. Day has made two trips to Washington to have this adjusted and has also laid the case before several congressmen. While Mr. Day will probably never realize on this demand, which would gain the United States much valuable land, it shows his wide-awakeness and his interest in things.

While Mr. Day is uneducated, his main hobby is education. There is no person in Minnesota more earnest on schools than this old chief. His demand is a boarding school at Nett Lake. The Government maintains that the Indian school at Tower, Minn., was built for the Bois Fort Indians; but the old chief maintains that the boarding school should have been built at Nett Lake and still demands that it be built there. The Government has built a nice day school at Nett Lake which is well attended, but when it comes to sending children to the boarding school at Tower, the old chief says, "No. Let the Government build a boarding school here as it agreed to and we will see that our children go to it." Furthermore, he has made several trips to Washington to demand that a boarding school be erected at Nett Lake and it is to be hoped he will live to see his greatest desire granted by the government.

Could Mr. Day have been educated, he would have made an able lawyer and statesman.