

PASSING OF MOSES

FAMOUS CHIEF OF THE COLUMBIAS
IS NEAR DEATH.

HE LIES ILL AT NESPELIM.

Smartest Indian in the West—Ren-
dered Aid to the Whites in
Nez Perce War.

Moses, chief of the Columbia tribe and patriarch of the Indians of the Inland Empire, is dying.

Major Anderson, Indian agent, who came down from his agency yesterday, brought the news that Moses is lying close to death at his Nespelim home and perhaps is dead by this time. The agency physician is attending him. He is stricken with age, has Bright's disease in an acute form and in addition suffers from rheumatism.

"Moses is chief of the Columbia tribe," said Former Agent Hal Cole. "He is 75 or 80 years of age, though that is largely a matter of guesswork, as none of the older Indians know their own ages. He comes of fighting stock. His father was killed in an Indian war in Montana, and he was on the warpath in that state, and was repeatedly wounded in battle. Later he was in the Indian battles on the Columbia river, west of Spokane.

Moses a Peaceful Indian.

"Moses remained at peace, though, during the Nez Perce war. He was urged by Joseph to join forces with him, but refused. He has since told me that he wavered but finally decided to remain at peace with the whites.

"Moses is really head chief of all the Indians on the Colville reservation, about 2000, including his band of the Columbias, the Okanogans, Lakes, Colvilles, Nespelims and San Poils. He lives near the Nespelim sub-agency, about three miles from Joseph's place. He is quite well off in land and stock, and for several years has been drawing an annuity of \$1000 from the government. In my judgment he is the smartest Indian in the west. He does no work himself, but knocks around and sees that others do.

"While I was agent he was interpreter between Joseph and the agent. He would hear Joseph's statements and translate them to the government interpreter, who could not speak the Nez Perce tongue. When I visited that part of the reservation, Moses was always ready with his statement, and knew exactly what he wanted to say. When he was through, he would say, 'I am done,' and that ended it. Most Indians want to go on talking forever.

"Moses is a large man, and when in health would weigh 240 pounds. He had a remarkable head. It always reminded me of the head of Henry Ward Beecher. He has one daughter, but no son. His only son was drowned a few years ago in the rapids of the Columbia near Fort Spokane.

"When we were negotiating the treaty for the north half of the Colville reservation, Moses gave valuable aid. The San Poils were standing out against the treaty, and were killing time by making speeches. Moses made a speech in which he declared that the opposition was making a great mistake. 'You are acting like a lot of fools,' he said. 'Don't you know that Washington is right on top of you, and if they want the land they are going to take whether we are willing or not?' He illustrated his idea by placing one hand above the other. I always found him straightforward and honest."