

council may consider as demanding an acquaintance with the usages of civilized nations.

The council, in which the government is in fact vested, is composed of thirteen persons ranking as chiefs of the highest order, four of whom are females.

When any subject demands their consideration, the facts and reasons, pro and con, are fully laid before the council, in a comprehensive and simple manner, and the vote and decision of its members are had, without any further recourse to Mr. Richards. The subject is always acted upon with great deliberation, and frequently with much discrimination and judgment; for not only are the chiefs a strong-minded people, but the female members of the council are also remarkable in this respect, and all appear desirous of doing what is right and proper.

An anecdote of what occurred at one of their deliberations, will, I think, illustrate their simple mode of coming to a proper decision, and show that when they are made to understand that any act or regulation will prove unjust, they are quite desirous to revise their own intended vote.

When they had under consideration the law relative to the descent of property, and previous to its final passage, each was, as usual, asked whether it should become a law. All had assented to its passage except one of the female members, who, when the interrogatory was put to her, laughed, but gave no answer. On being pressed, she said, "The law to which you have assented, has it not passed? My vote is not then needed." But, supposing from this, that she had reasons for withholding her vote, they pressed her to speak, when she asked, "Does not this proposed law give one-third of the property to the king, and two-thirds to the heirs of every one?" Yes. "Is this just? How differently does this affect one or two of the chiefs and myself! They have no children; I have four. My heirs will suffer, theirs will not. This is not right."

They saw the subject in a new light, and at once determined to adjourn, for the purpose of thinking the affair over. They finally came to the conclusion, that all the property of those who had children should go to the offspring, but that of the property of those who had no direct heirs, the king should be entitled to one-third. Thus stands the law at present.

On the 2d October, I received a visit from Mr. Richards, who communicated to me the desire of the king that I should visit him. In conformity with this request, I called upon him, accompanied by Captain Hudson. Although I had departed, after my first visit,