

Boston April-19 1854

Dear Bradburn,

I received yours of March 31 - and am very sorry to know that you have no "working position." But I hardly know whether I am sorry or not that you did not get hold of the Commonwealth, as matters would have stood. I fear you were to pay too high a price - but I more fear that you could not have got along with the paper so long as Dr Howe retains his connexion with it. Since I wrote you, (I think), I have had some direct information, as to the interference he insists upon exercising with the columns of the paper - such as I think you would not submit to, if you were the rightful and responsible editor. Unless therefore Howe's interest could have been purchased, I should hardly think it safe for you to invest capital in the paper.

I have sometimes thought, and undeed still think, that the control of the paper could be obtained on much better terms, and under better auspices, than when you were here, if you had a better capital at command.

My plan would be for you and Wright to revive the Chronotype, or for you alone to start a new paper, of a more radical character than the Commonwealth, or at least make a demonstration towards doing so. The effect would be to frighten the owners of the Commonwealth, and induce them to sell to you at better terms than they have offered heretofore.

I should not of course, wish you to undertake such a plan without Mr Sewall's concurrence because as he has been such a friend to you, I should not wish to injure the values of his property. But I think he would favor the measure, and might render you essential aid in getting the control of the stock of the other proprietors, or of so many as it might be necessary to buy in.

A radical spirited paper would move the Commonwealth off the track in six weeks. The Free Soil party is dying of fogyism. The Nebraska bill may seem to galvanise it into action, for the moment, but that is not going to last. The great incurable obstacle to the progress of the party is, that it proposes no progress. Its ideas are all fogyish, and tame, and cowardly. It is led by a few old stereotyped or rather fossilised Whigs, who are as much frightened at any new idea in favor of freedom, as at any new move in favor of slavery. It is impossible to get up any enthusiasm under such circumstances. A party must have ideas, must propose to do something, if it would keep up one interest on the part of the

people, and especially of the young men.

Now would be a glorious time to start a new courageous paper in Boston. Webster and Clay are dead, and the Whigs have more to rally them. The Democrats are as badly off- and the Free Soilers are in the same predicament. All parties are nevertheless interested at this moment in the slavery question, because there is nothing else for them to be interested in. Now a bold paper, that should propose to do something, would attract general attention, and an enthusiastic support and distance all the others at once. And if such a paper were started here, or proposed to be started, I think the Commonwealth would cave in, and sell out, on such terms as it could. I have no doubt Mr Sewell would be glad to see it done, and that he would much rather have his stock in the new paper than in the old. If you could buy out Howe and Baldwin, or Howe and some other proprietor, so as with Mr Sewell's stock, to get a control of the majority of the stock, that would be sufficient.

I think if you were to propose a new paper, or if you would even buy out Howe alone, that Baldwin would like to have you come in as co-editor, and an equal with him. Baldwin is a clever fellow and a sensible man - a man of good judgment in politics - much more so than the foggy leaders of the Free Soilers hereabouts. But I think he does not like to write much. He has a man by the name of Stowe to write some for him and lets Howe write some. I think he would be glad to have you as a co-editor, if you were also a proprietor and I think you and he would get along well together. He would take all the business cares off your hands.

I think it might be well for you to sound Baldwin on the question, whether, if you were to buy out Howe, he would agree to your coming in as co-editor, equal with him? That would be all that you would need to contract for, for the greater part of the writing would fall upon you of course, without that being specially contracted for.

From some conversation with Baldwin, I think he dispises the fogyism of the Free Soil leaders hereabouts and that he would cast them off, if he did not dread the labor of writing as much as it would be necessary for him to do to sustain himself. I should not wonder at all if he would jump at the chance of having you take hold with him, the understanding that the party should be put on a new track.

I am getting along well with my argument, though not so fast as I would like - The Hildreths are well - I saw them today.

My love to Mrs. Bradburn.

Yours truly,

L. Spooner