

SIJUX INDIAN TREATY.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1888.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

Mr. MORRILL submitted the following

RESOLUTION:

Whereas the following statements in relation to the action of the Sioux Indian Commission have appeared in several of the leading newspapers of the country, and contain grave charges of official misconduct on the part of said Commission:

[Saint Louis Globe-Democrat, August 8.]

Two of the commissioners (Judge Wright, of Tennessee, and Rev. Mr. Cleveland, of Dakota) have been inclined to a fair and decent policy, which, if adopted, might have secured the consent of the Indians, but unfortunately the man selected as chairman has attempted to pursue the same tactics with the warriors of the reservation that he employs in ruling a few weak-minded children at Carlisle, Pa. For days it has been apparent that the Indians were growing more bitter in their opposition to the treaty daily, but not until to-day did Pratt realize the fact. Puffed up with his importance in the East, where he exhibited his Indian children and educates the whites to believe that he is the greatest "Indian controller in the country," he has been slow to believe that he knows absolutely nothing of the true Indian character. For the past week he has had control of the Associated Press wire and has been dictating so-called news which has been misleading and unfair to the press depending upon this service.

At last the Conference has been closed, not by the commissioners but by the Indians, and he can no longer blind the public with his silly reports of the great work which he is accomplishing.

The commissioners again warned the Indians of what would follow their refusal to sign, and informed them that unless they accepted this treaty their lands might be taken from them without giving them a cent for them, but the speeches of the commissioners had no effect, and when John Grass and Mad Bear replied, it was evident that the climax had been reached. When Grass closed his speech by calling upon the Indians to disperse and leave the agency, a grand break was made, and but for the action of Agent McLaughlin the commission would not have been given an opportunity to adjourn. As it was, the Indians remained long enough to hear that the conference would now be adjourned indefinitely; that the commission would leave for other agencies, and that after other tribes had taken action Standing Rock would again be visited.

[New York World.]

ALLEGED LIES TO INDIANS—HARSH METHODS BEING USED, IT IS SAID, TO COERCE THE SIOUX.

WASHINGTON, September 7.

Dr. Bland, secretary of the Indian Defense Association, of this city, is in receipt of information as follows:

The Sioux commission, now in the Sioux country, having failed to get the Indians to sign the agreement to surrender half their reservation, are now resorting to threats, telling them that if they do not sign the agreement soldiers will be sent to

drive them from their reservation to some other, and that in such a contingency they will lose their lands and get nothing.

It is also said the Indians charge that Captain Pratt, chairman of the commission, on their refusing to sign the agreement printed in black ink, presented another, printed in red, which they understand to mean war unless they attach their signatures. The Indians say Pratt told them they would yet be compelled to sign the paper. This they say they will never do, nor do they believe the Great Father at Washington instructed Captain Pratt to force them to sign any paper against their will.

[Omaha Bee, August 7.]

And now Judge Wright, of the commission, is telling them that if they refuse to sign this bill the troops will distribute them among other reservations, and they will lose their land without compensation. The commission has taken possession of the telegraph, and no dispatch can be sent without being inspected.

[New York Tribune.]

BULLDOZING THE INDIANS.

In our report of the Standing Rock conference of Saturday the following passage occurs: "Judge Wright reminded them (the Sioux) of the white man and the Indian who went hunting and divided the game, the white man taking the turkey and giving the buzzard to the Indian. He admonished them to accept the treaty, so that they would not share the fate of their brother in the story." Commissioner Cleveland was even more outspoken: "Before closing he reminded them that if they failed to accept this treaty they might be compelled to give up their lands without recompense."

The American people have, we trust, a conscience, and it ought to be stirred by this amazing method of recommending the treaty to the Sioux. The line of argument employed by the commissioners is degrading and humiliating to the national honor in the last degree. They say in effect: "We represent a great nation, but one whose honesty can not be depended upon. It is true that Congress has decreed that this reservation shall not be opened unless the consent of three-fourths of the Indians to whom it belongs is obtained. But you must not rely upon that pledge being kept. On the contrary we now tell you plainly that unless you accept the treaty, even against your judgment, there is imminent danger that the United States will steal your land without more ado."

Let it be understood plainly that this is practically what the United States commissioners have said to the Indians at Standing Rock. Let it be further understood that, however shameful the position taken must appear to all right-minded people, the commissioners have not been drawing wholly upon their imagination, have not invented a danger which has no tangible existence; for three years ago Congress showed its entire willingness to do precisely this outrageous thing, to steal the half of the Sioux reservation bodily and without pretense of right; and but for the force of public opinion then brought to bear by the Indian Rights Association, the seizure would have been carried into effect at that time. Now, however, Congress stands committed to abide by the decision of the Indians. It has expressly provided that the consent of three-fourths of the Sioux shall be necessary to the opening of the reservation. Is it to be supposed that the freedom of that consent was not implied in the stipulation?

What the commissioners are now doing is only too apparent. They are trying to bulldoze the Indians; trying to intimidate them into consenting to the treaty; and what is worst of all, trying to do this by alleging the dishonesty and perfidy of their own Government. The Sioux are plainly told that they must not rely upon the good faith of Congress, or believe that it will keep its engagements; and in the same breath they are chidden because they suspect the sincerity of the Government in its promises of payment for their lands. Surely cynicism can hardly go beyond the exhibition these commissioners are now making at Standing Rock. This is their idea of "negotiating a treaty," to threaten the other party with high-handed confiscation of their lands if they refuse to sell them for less than they believe them to be worth to a Government whose good faith they have already had a score of reasons for doubting.

We are compelled to repeat what we have said before, that the most brutal and reckless seizure of Indian lands would be less discreditable than the methods at present being employed. If the country is not again to be disgraced by the immorality and baseness of its Indian policy, the commissioners at Standing Rock must be instructed to suspend their bulldozing tactics and to tell the Indians that they are

free to decide the question for themselves. In a word, the country must compel Congress to stand by its own laws, and the outrageous intimation that unless the Sioux yield to threats they will be plundered in cold blood by the people of the United States must be repudiated and rebuked emphatically.

Therefore,

Be it resolved, That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, requested to inform this House whether there is any foundation for these statements, and to take such steps as may in his judgment be proper to ascertain whether undue influence has been used to secure the signatures of any of the Indians to the treaty.

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