

APPENDIX—CAUSES OF THE OUTBREAK

COMMISSIONER MORGAN'S STATEMENT

[From the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1891, Vol. I, 132-135.]

In stating the events which led to this outbreak among the Sioux, the endeavor too often has been merely to find some opportunity for locating blame. The causes are complex, and many are obscure and remote. Among them may be named the following:

First. A feeling of unrest and apprehension in the mind of the Indians has naturally grown out of the rapid advance in civilization and the great changes which this advance has necessitated in their habits and mode of life.

Second. Prior to the agreement of 1876 buffalo and deer were the main support of the Sioux. Food, tents, bedding were the direct outcome of hunting, and, with furs and pelts as articles of barter or exchange, it was easy for the Sioux to procure whatever constituted for them the necessities, the comforts, or even the luxuries of life. Within eight years from the agreement of 1876 the buffalo had gone, and the Sioux had left to them alkali land and government rations. It is hard to overestimate the magnitude of the calamity, as they viewed it, which happened to these people by the sudden disappearance of the buffalo and the large diminution in the numbers of deer and other wild animals. Suddenly, almost without warning, they were expected at once and without previous training to settle down to the pursuits of agriculture in a land largely unfitted for such use. The freedom of the chase was to be exchanged for the idleness of the camp. The boundless range was to be abandoned for the circumscribed reservation, and abundance of plenty to be supplanted by limited and decreasing government subsistence and supplies. Under these circumstances it is not in human nature not to be discontented and restless, even turbulent and violent.

Third. During a long series of years, treaties, agreements, cessions of land and privileges, and removals of bands and agencies have kept many of the Sioux, particularly those at Pine Ridge and Rosebud, in an unsettled condition, especially as some of the promises made them were fulfilled tardily or not at all. (A brief history of negotiations with the Sioux was given in my letter of December 24, 1890, to the Department, which will be found in the appendix, page 182.)

Fourth. The very large reduction of the great Sioux reservation, brought about by the Sioux commission through the consent of the large majority of the adult males, was bitterly opposed by a large, influential minority. For various reasons, they regarded the cession as unwise, and did all in their power to prevent its consummation, and afterwards were constant in their expressions of dissatisfaction and in their endeavors to awaken a like feeling in the minds of those who signed the agreement.

Fifth. There was diminution and partial failure of the crops for 1889, by reason of their neglect by the Indians, who were congregated in large numbers at the council with the Sioux commission, and a further diminution of ordinary crops by the drought of 1890. Also, in 1888, the disease of black leg appeared among the cattle of the Indians.

Sixth. At this time, by delayed and reduced appropriations, the Sioux rations were temporarily cut down. Rations were not diminished to such an extent as to bring the Indians to starvation or even extreme suffering, as has been often reported; but short rations came just after the Sioux commission had negotiated the agreement for the cession of lands, and, as a condition of securing the signatures of the majority, had assured the Indians that their rations would be continued unchanged. To this matter the Sioux commission called special attention in their report dated December 24, 1889, as follows:

"During our conference at the different agencies we were repeatedly asked whether the acceptance or rejection of the act of Congress would influence the action of the