

Noted

#135 M 8120 Indian Rights Assoc. 1890

At a conference with the chief men among the Sissetons at Gabriel Renville's house, he was asked: "Will you please tell us just what our status is? We are told that we are now citizens of the United States, and we have no more chiefs or head men, is that so?" "When you get your patents you are citizens, and citizens know nothing of chiefs." "Well, what is the relation of an Indian Agent to a citizen of the United States? We have an agent who assumes to do certain things with reference to our property, and to exercise certain control over us. What has an Indian Agent to do with a citizen?" Your condition is similar to that of a pole which has developed legs and has not dropped his tail. You are in a transition state. You have your allotments which are own, as a citizen; so far as that land is concerned you are as free/p.18/ from an Agent. You have a large tribal interest yet you are not a citizen. You make necessary an Agent by keeping up the tribal system. You have to submit to some things that other citizens do not. You will get rid of the Agency system and Bureau interference as you dispose of all tribal property."

"One man has shot another one; another one has made an assault with an axe--other crimes are committed which our chiefs and head men used to punish under our Indian laws, but they have no application to citizens of the United States; neither can an Indian Agent with his Indian police, arrest and punish a citizen. This old power is gone, but where is your sheriff and the judge who can deal with citizens on an Indian Reservation?"

As no answer could be given to that question, it is respectfully referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs in the Senate, or to the Judiciary Committee.