The responsibility for this fatal tardiness would appear to rest with the Indian Committee of the House which, through forgetfulness or some form of negligence, failed to act at the proper time.

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in response to an inquiry for light from this Association, states: "In January, 1890, the Secretary, in transmitting the report of the Sioux Commission to the President, submitted a draft of a bill to carry out the promises of the Commission. Among the items was one for $100,000, to enable the Secretary of the Interior to purchase for the Sioux nation of Indians additional beef for use, the rations having been reduced on account of reduced appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1890. The Senate passed the bill during the first session of the Fifty-first Congress (last summer), but no action having been taken by the House, the Indian Office was unable to furnish additional beef during 1890."

The foregoing quotation should be carefully read and its significance appreciated. The Indians and whites alike have/p5. suffered in Dakota during the last two years from failure of crops produced by extreme drought.

It is also evident that the food supply at Pine Ridge was diminished, in addition to these causes, by what is known as "shrinkage of beef," brought about through a bad system of obtaining contract cattle from a long distance--the Indian Territory or Texas--whereby unacclimated cattle shrink in weight after reaching the Agency by being held through the winter before they are issued. A steer may thus be reduced from its original weight one hundred and fifty or two hundred pounds.

The Indian has been obliged to bear this loss, and has naturally complained under it.

Another serious cause of trouble has been the prevalence and intensity of the Messiah superstition. This has been treated at length in other publications of the Society. It is sufficient to remark here that the belief in the coming of an Indian Messiah, who should drive out the white