

appropriation. There is no difference of opinion and no question as to facts anywhere. But the appropriation committee thinks that present distress should be removed only at the price of refusing to pay to these Indians their back annuities, and the/p.22./ bill must lie over until there is time to ventilate that question in debate. It is of a piece with our whole outrageous dealing with the Indian.

The Pioneer Press will not be accused of sentimentality in discussing our Indian relations. It has been disgusted enough, Heaven knows, with the weak and silly paltering that honors cruel brutes like Sitting Bull until they can do mischief that costs the country thousands of dollars and the lives of many brave men, red and white. And yet even this is less infamous than the deliberate breaking of pledges that leaves to the friendly Indian no choice but starvation or revolt. If the Sissetons and Wahpetons were to rise just now in order that they might get food for themselves and their families, we should presently mow them down with Gatlings, and bury, with all the honors of war, those of their leaders who remained faithful to the honors of war, those of their leaders who remained faithful to the United States and turned their arms against their destitute and dying kinsmen. But when they ask of us the means of life, pledged by us and denied to them, when they need not royal honors in death but the wherewith to sustain their miserable lives, we are too busy to attend to it. They can wait. It is so much easier for them to die of starvation than for a Congressman to miss the chance of an objection or the glory of a speech. The honest men of the country are weary and sick at heart with this whole Indian scandal, of which our treatment of these friendly and loyal people is a most infamous item. It would be better for the Indian, it would be more creditable to us, to order the military now in the field to march to the Sisseton agency and there quietly murder every Indian waiting for food denied and money due him, than to keep up this ghastly farce. From beginning to end it has been the greatest misfortune to the Indian to keep honorably his obligations with this government.