

disposed to depredate upon the Indians, even to maiming or killing them, seemed to feel that no matter what excesses they committed, the military would shield them.

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/"It was at this council that the hitherto untried policy in connection with Indians, of endeavoring to conquer by kindness, was inaugurated. Swift Bear, a Brule chief, then and now a faithful friend of the whites, had interested himself to induce the hostile bands to come to this council, and had promised them, if peace were made, that ammunition should be given them to kill game for the winter. This promise was not authorized by the commissioners, but we were assured it had been made, not only by him, but by others of our runners, and that nothing less would have brought them in. These Indians are very poor and needy. The game in this section is fast disappearing, and the bow and the arrow are scarcely sufficient to provide them food. To give one of these Indians powder and ball, is to give him meat. To refuse it, in his judgment, dooms him to starvation; and worse than this, he looks upon the refusal (especially after a profession of friendship on his part) as an imputation upon his truthfulness and fidelity. If an Indian is to be trusted at all, he must be trusted to the full extent of his word. If you betray symptoms of distrust, he discovers it with nature's intuition, and at once condemns the falsehood that would blend friendship and suspicion together. Whatever our people may have to say of the insincerity and duplicity of the Indian, would fail /¹⁹⁷ to express the estimate entertained by many Indian of the white man's character in this respect. Promises have so often been broken by those with whom they usually come in contact; cupidity has so long plied its work, deaf to their cries of suffering; and heartless cruelty has so often sought them in the garb of charity, that to obtain their confidence, our promises must be scrupulously fulfilled, and our professions of friendship divested of all appearance of selfishness and duplicity. We are now satisfied, whatever the criticisms on our conduct at the time - and they were very severe, both by the ignorant and the corrupt - that