

"National Indian Defense

Association,

Washington, D. C. Dec. 27, 1899.

"To the Honorable Commissioner,

Indian Affairs,

Washington, D. C.

"Sir:-

"I observe in the public press a statement of the effect that the body of Sitting Bull was removed from the coffin before it was buried and taken to a dissecting room. The reasonable supposition is that it is the attention of the parties having the matter in charge to make his bones a subject of speculation and perhaps his skin also, as the papers state that a Bismark merchant offered \$1,000 for it.

I beg to ask if you do not hold it the duty of the government, as guardian of the Indians to inquire into this matter and

11.

209.

take measures to punish any parties, whether government officials or not, who may be found guilty of such desecration of the dead chief's body?

Respectfully.

T. A. Bland."

Looking back at it now it is all a ghastly joke but at that time it was rather a serious matter in the aspect it presented to the public -- this outcome of the fake of the Bismark string-fiend. Dr. Bland's letter was referred to me for an explanation, and without comment, by commissioner Morgan, and as the body of Sitting Bull was never in my possession -- except in that it was brought in from Grand River by the Indian police under my control -- I could do nothing but refer the Bland letter to Col. Drum with this endorsement: