

asked that a discrimination be made between summer and winter weight of steers. They said: "If you give us four hundred steers every other Wednesday during the summer and list them as weighing twelve hundred pounds each, you should list the same number during the winter as weighing nine hundred pounds each. Your cattle are not stable-fed; they range about in the winter snows searching for grass. They find but a small quantity; therefore they cannot fatten, but, on the contrary, grow poor. The shrinkage is not in bone and sinew, but in the most tender portions. Write to the Great Father and say we cannot live upon the few cattle he gives us."

The Great Father, of course, took no notice of this request, and the Indians were compelled to slaughter their own herds. One by one the cattle disappeared, until at last but few remained upon the government ranges. The agent, seeing the work of years vanishing in weeks, made another frantic appeal to Washington. But his letter was pigeon-holed along with those of other agents. The authorities could not understand why Indians should suffer. Did they not fare sumptuously every day at the expense of a rich and generous government? Why, then, should they harass the commissioner by frequent appeals for aid? It was evident that all these Indians were liars seeking to defraud a government which had already been too liberal. And so the bureau did nothing, and the Sioux continued to kill their cattle.

Such was the situation and such the state of mind among the tribes of the Sioux when the startling message of Two Lance was delivered at the great council on Wounded Knee Creek.

In a few days the whole nation was infatuated with the new craze. They danced, and prayed, and pleaded with such earnestness as can scarcely be imagined. But their God heard not. They saw not their gifts thrust into the matting about the Sacred Tree. He regarded no song of appeal for aid.