

BEAR RIB'S SPEECH:

M 2101
#126
(Yankton?)
Sale of land R. G. W. B.

ROBINSON
pp. 249-250

WSE

"My Brother: To whom does this land belong? I believe it belongs to me.

Look at me and at the ground. Which do you think is the oldest? The ground; and on it I was born. I have no instruction. I give my own ideas. I do not know how many years. It is much older than I. Here we are, our nine nations. Here are our principal men gathered together. When you tell us anything, we wish to say "yes" to whar we like, and you will do the same. There none of the Yanktons here. Where are they? It is said that I have a father (agent), and when he tells me anything I say yes. And when I ask him anything, I want him to say yes. I call you my brother. What you told me yesterday, I believe is true. The Ynaktions below us are a poor poeple. I don't know where their land is. I pity them. These lower Yanktons I know did own a piece of land, but they sold it long ago. I don't know where they got any more. Since I have been born I do not know who owns two, three, four, more pieces of land. When I got land it was all in one piece and we were born and still live on it. These Yanktons, we took pity on them. They had no land. We lent them horses to keep that land for us, but I never told them to steal it and go and sell it. I call my my brother and want you to take pity on me, and if any one steals anything from me I want the privilege of calling for it. If those men who did it secretly had asked me to make a treaty for its sale I should not have consented. We who are here all understand each other, but I do not agree that they shall steal the land and sell it. If the white people want my land and I should give it to them where should I stay? I have no place else to go. I hear that a reservation has been kept for the Yanktons below. I will speak again on this subject. I cannot spare it and I like it very much. All of this country on each side of the river belongs to me. I know that from the Mississippi to this river the country all belongs to us, and that we have traveled from the Yellowstone to the Platte. All of this country, as I have said, is ours. If you, my brother, was to ask me for it I would not give it to you, for I like it, and I hope you will listen to me."