

ARHE - Frontier Expansion Document set #1

4. A California Law for the Government and Protection of the Indians, 1850

The People of the State of California, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact
as follows:

1. Justices of the Peace shall have jurisdiction in all cases of complaints by, for, or against Indians, in their respective Townships in this State.
2. Persons and proprietors of land on which Indians are residing, shall permit such Indians peaceably to reside on such lands, unmolested in the pursuit of their usual avocations for the maintenance of themselves and families: *Provided*, the

white person or proprietor in possession of lands may apply to a Justice of the Peace in the Township where the Indians reside, to set off to such Indians a certain amount of land, and, on such application, the Justice shall set off a sufficient amount of land for the necessary wants of such Indians, including the site of their village or residence, if they so prefer it; and in no case shall such selection be made to the prejudice of such Indians, nor shall they be forced to abandon their homes or villages where they have resided for a number of years; and either party feeling themselves aggrieved, can appeal to the County Court from the decision of the Justice: and then divided, a record shall be made of the lands so set off in the Court so dividing them, and the Indians shall be permitted to remain thereon until otherwise provided for.

3. Any person having or hereafter obtaining a minor Indian, male or female, from the parents or relations of such Indian minor, and wishing to keep it, such person shall go before a Justice of the Peace in his Township, with the parents or friends of the child, and if the Justice of the Peace becomes satisfied that no compulsory means have been used to obtain the child from its parents or friends, shall enter on-record, in a book kept for that purpose, the sex and probable age of the child, and shall give to such person a certificate, authorizing him or her to have the care, custody, control, and earnings of such minor, until he or she obtains the age of majority. Every male Indian shall be deemed to have attained his majority at eighteen, and the female at fifteen years.

4. Any person having a minor Indian in his care, as described in the foregoing Section of this Act, who shall neglect to clothe and suitably feed such minor Indian, or shall inhumanly treat him or her, on conviction thereof shall be subject to a fine not less than ten dollars, at the discretion of a Court or Jury; and the Justice of the Peace, in his discretion, may place the minor Indian in the care of some other person, giving him the same rights and liabilities that the former master of said minor was entitled and subject to.

5. Any person wishing to hire an Indian, shall go before a Justice of the Peace with the Indian, and make such contract as the Justice may approve, and the Justice shall file such contract in writing in his office, and all contracts so made shall be binding between the parties; but no contract between a white man and an Indian, for labor, shall otherwise be obligatory on the part of an Indian.

6. Complaints may be made before a Justice of the Peace, by white persons or Indians; but in no case shall a white man be convicted of any offence upon the testimony of an Indian.

7. If any person forcibly conveys any Indian from his home, or compels him to work, or perform any service against his will, in this State, except as provided in this Act, he or they shall, on conviction, be fined in any sum not less than fifty dollars, at the discretion of the Court or jury.

8. It shall be the duty of the Justices of the Peace, once in six months in every year, to make a full and correct statement to the Court of Sessions of their county, of all moneys received for fines imposed on Indians, and all fees allowed for services rendered under the provisions of this Act; and said Justices shall pay over to the County Treasurer of their respective counties, all money they may have received for fines and not appropriated, or fees for services rendered under this Act; and the Treasurer shall keep a correct statement of all money so received, which shall be

termed the "Indian Fund" of the county. The Treasurer shall pay out any money of said funds in his hands, on a certificate of a Justice of the Peace of his county, for fees and expenditures incurred in carrying out the provisions of this law.

9. It shall be the duty of Justices of the Peace, in their respective townships, as well as all other peace officers in this State, to instruct the Indians in their neighborhood in the laws which relate to them, giving them such advice as they may deem necessary and proper; and if any tribe or village of Indians refuse or neglect to obey the laws, the Justice of the Peace may punish the guilty chiefs or principal men by reprimand or fine, or otherwise reasonably chastise them.

10. If any person or persons shall set the prairie on fire, or refuse to use proper exertions to extinguish the fire when the prairies are burning, such person or persons shall be subject to fine or punishment, as a Court may adjudge proper.

11. If any Indian shall commit an unlawful offence against a white person, such person shall not inflict punishment for such offence, but may, without process, take the Indian before a Justice of the Peace, and on conviction, the Indian shall be punished according to the provisions of this Act.

12. In all cases of trial between a white man and an Indian, either party may require a jury.

13. Justices may require the chiefs and influential men of any village to apprehend and bring before them or him any Indian charged or suspected of an offence.

14. When an Indian is convicted of an offence before a Justice of the Peace punishable by fine, any white person may, by consent of the Justice, give bond for said Indian, conditioned for the payment of said fine and costs, and in such case the Indian shall be compelled to work for the person so bailing, until he has discharged or cancelled the fine assessed against him: *Provided*, the person bailing shall treat the Indian humanely, and clothe and feed him properly; the allowance given for such labor shall be fixed by the Court, when the bond is taken.

15. If any person in this State shall sell, give, or furnish to any Indian, male or female, any intoxicating liquors (except when administered in sickness), for good cause shown, he, she, or they so offending shall, on conviction thereof, be fined not less than twenty dollars for each offence, or be imprisoned not less than five days, or fined and imprisoned, as the Court may determine.

16. An Indian convicted of stealing horses, mules, cattle, or any valuable thing, shall be subject to receive any number of lashes not exceeding twenty-five, or shall be subject to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars, at the discretion of the Court or Jury.

17. When an Indian is sentenced to be whipped, the Justice may appoint a white man, or an Indian at his discretion, to execute the sentence in his presence, and shall not permit unnecessary cruelty in the execution of the sentence.

18. All fines, forfeitures, penalties recovered under or by this Act, shall be paid into the treasury of the county, to the credit of the Indian Fund as provided in Section Eight.

19. All white persons making application to a Justice of the Peace, for confirmation of a contract with or in relation to an Indian, shall pay the fee, which shall not exceed two dollars for each contract determined and filed as provided in this Act, and for all other services, such fees as are allowed for similar services under other law of this State. *Provided*, the application fee for hiring Indians, or keeping

minors, and fees and expenses for setting off lands to Indians, shall be paid by the white person applying.

20. Any Indian able to work and support himself in some honest calling, not having wherewithal to maintain himself, who shall be found loitering and strolling about, or frequenting public places where liquors are sold, begging, or leading an immoral or profligate course of life, shall be liable to be arrested on the complaint of any resident citizen of the county, and brought before any Justice of the Peace of the proper county, Mayor or Recorder of any incorporated town or city, who shall examine said accused Indian, and hear the testimony in relation thereto, and if said Justice, Mayor or Recorder shall be satisfied that he is a vagrant, as above set forth, he shall make out a warrant under his hand and seal, authorizing and requiring the officer having him in charge or custody, to hire out such vagrant within twenty-four hours to the best bidder, by public notice given as he shall direct, for the highest price that can be had, for any term not exceeding four months; and such vagrant shall be subject to and governed by the provisions of this Act, regulating guardians and minors, during the time which he has been so hired. The money received for his hire, shall, after deducting the costs, and the necessary expense for clothing for said Indian, which may have been purchased by his employer, be, if he be without a family, paid into the County Treasury, to the credit of the Indian fund. But if he have a family, the same shall be appropriated for their use and benefit: *Provided*, that any such vagrant, when arrested, and before judgment, may relieve himself by giving to such Justice, Mayor, or Recorder, a bond, with good security, conditioned that he will, for the next twelve months, conduct himself with good behavior, and betake to some honest employment for support.

5. William Joseph (Nisenan) Describes the Gold Rush, c. 1849

Long ago the Indians had a camp on the north side of the oke-m mountain, the white people call that Mt. Oakum. The bluff by the river at the north side of that, (they) call that pu-lak' Bluff, and the white people call that Buck's Bar, in that river Indians and white men prospected for gold.

On the west side of Mt. Oakum two white men had their home in a small log cabin. From there they used to go to work at the river every day. The door of their house being left open, an Indian boy who was hunting around, felt hungry and went to that house to eat. When he had finished eating he saw two buckskin sacks full of gold, and silver money on that table. He took (it), put (it) in his pocket, and went off with (it).

When the two men came home from work they missed the gold and the money. They followed that Indian's tracks. They tracked (him) to the Indian's camp. They saw (him) playing cards and putting down sackfuls of gold. The white men took

From Hans Jorgen Uldall and William Shipley, *Nisenan Texts and Dictionary*, vol. 46 of the *University of California Publications in Linguistics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 177-181. Copyright © 1966 The Regents of the University of California.

him right there. They took back all the money. But they took him all the same to a little valley on the west side of Mt. Oakum.

The white men gathered. From there, afterwards, they summoned all the Indian chiefs. They kept him there all day, waiting for one chief. When it was about three o'clock, they put a rope around (his) neck.

At length, that chief arrived. The Indians said, "(They) are waiting for you, they are going to hang the boy, go and prevent (it)!"

That chief went in the center (of the group of people). He talked, speaking white language, "Captain he says, Lowas he says, Hemas he says, 'Hang him up!'" he said.

(The white people) said to the mule, "Get up!" (The mule) pulled (him) up by the rope and hanged (him). All the Indians hollered and cried. When (he) was dead, (they) let (him) back down. They gave (him) to the Indians. The Indians took the body along and burned (it).

After that the Indians did not burgle or steal anything belonging to white people, "That is the way (they) will treat us if they catch (us)," they said. When the chiefs made speeches they said, "Do not take anything from (them), do not steal from (them), (they) will treat you that way if they catch (you)! Those white men are different men, they are not our relatives," they said, "(They) will hang you without mercy!" they said. All the chiefs preached that. They talked about that at every big time [celebration]. The Indians were very much afraid of the whites in the early days. That is what was done, the whites were bad in the old days, those who prospected for gold. Those who have come now brought women along, white women, those ones were good, they gave us all kinds of food when we went to their houses. That was bad whites in the early days, those who prospected for gold. Those who came next were good whites, married people, that was how it was in the old days.

About a year after that hanging (an Indian boy) found gold in a creek while he was hunting a deer, he killed the deer near that. He looked around for a tree to hang it on. He saw this gold. He took the deer along instead of hanging it up. When he brought (it) in to camp he told his relatives, "There is a lot of this gold, let us go tomorrow!" he said.

That morning at dawn they went, only the men, they left the women. They all brought a lot of gold. They took (it) to town to exchange (it), five or six times to that town, the same fellows.

The white men talked about (it), "Those Indians bring in a lot of gold from somewhere," said the storekeeper. Those white men talked about (it), those who worked on that river. "Let us watch those Indians, where is it they are always going?" they said. They saw those fellows go, the white men tracked (them) that way. From the hills they watched them at work. When the sun was in the west the Indians went back from work. (The white men) went past them in the opposite direction and found the gold.

The whites gathered and went there. When the Indians tried to go to work they found the whites there. They sneaked away, "That is those fellows, those who hanged that boy!" they said. That way those white men stole their prospecting place. The whites name that Indian Digging. The white men made a small town there and a ditch, and then they placer-mined with a lot of water and went twenty feet into the mountain.

This is over now, even the town is dead now, only one keeps a store there, a Chinaman. That is still called Indian Digging. That is what they did long ago, those fellows are dead and gone, there is not one of the Indians alive now. That is that.

6. An Indian Agent Views Conditions in the California Mines, 1854

Nevada City. Dec. 16, 1854

In accordance with your request, I have proceeded to obtain from the best information possible the number of Indians in Nevada and adjoining Counties, the names & number of their respective tribes, Their present condition and means of living, and herewith have the honor to report to you the result of my examinations. . . .

In order the more satisfactorily to ascertain their numbers & condition, I have been compelled to visit the most of their camps, and the counties of Yuba, Sierra Nevada, and Placer, in person and altho' my Estimates may not be strickly correct, yet they may be relied upon to be as near as correct as the nature of the circumstances will permit. The difficulty of ascertaining their exact number arises from the fact that they are frequently changing their camps from one section of their respective domain to another and sub-dividing their camps so as to be more convenient to the towns & ranches of the Whites. The great number of deaths which have in the last few years ocured among them have tended to mislead many as to their real numbers at present. It will be seen by reference to this report that death has reduced their numbers in these counties more than half in the last 4 years. The cause of this mortality has been attributed to different causes. Some allege that it is the result of the change of their mode of living, being now compelled to live on entirely different food to what they were formally accustomed. Again it is said it is caused by adopting the Customs of the Americans in wearing clothes, that habitual use of ardent spirits which some traders have very improperly and illegally sold to them. These are some of the causes which have tended to swell the list of mortality among them, but the greatest number of deaths has been caused by that great Indian Scourge the Small Pox. This disease has in some instances entirely extinguished some of the smaller tribes, there being so few left by the disease that they have abandoned their camp and joined their neighboring tribes.

At this time there is none of this disease among them. Yet I find many of the Indians sick in the camps, I have visited and evidences of Mourning in almost every family. The disease with which they seem to be complaining most of this time, is a kind of slow feever which I think is the result of eating excessive quantities of spoiled meat, offal picked up by them about the various butcher pens which are to be found all over the mining country. With this refuse flesh they fill themselves, and perhaps it will be another week before they will get another meal, this creates diseases. Near the Emigrant road, and in the foothills many of the emigrant

An Indian Agent Describes Conditions of the California Mines, 1854. This document can be found in the Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, California Superintendency, RG 75, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Stock die, diseased & the Indians driven by pinching hunger have lived upon these carcasses. In one tribe I visited 7 had died from this cause, (as was supposed) in the two weeks preceeding my visit. . . .

"Their present condition" is worse in my opinion than when the country was first settled by the Whites. They arrange their camps for the Winter more carelessly than formerly. Their manner of building huts now is to set up a few old sticks about ten feet in length & about eight feet apart at the base and fastened at the top by vines or withes. On this conical shaped frame they throw . . . brush and cover that either with old pieces of canvas obtained from deserted tents, or set up the bark of the pine against it making a kind of shelter from the rain of the winter season. An Aperture is left in the hut about two feet wide and three feet high through which the family and dogs crawl into them. They build a fire in the center around which they sit and sleep apparently comfortable. I am informed that prior to the settlement of the country by the Whites, they covered most of their huts with dirt, thus making them a perfect shelter and quite warm and comfortable in the winter.

Ten or twelve of these huts compose one camp they are generally crowded close together leaving the chiefs or sub-chiefs hut in the center.

They subsist chiefly upon Flour & Beef. They purchase it in the towns & at the ranches near which they camp with the gold dust they obtain by panning around in the gold mines.

Sometimes a Miner will permit them to take a pan of dirt from his claim from which they get some gold. They scrape up the dirt about the end of the sluice boxes which sometimes pays them very well. On the rivers they obtain gold by scraping out the crevasses that has been abandoned by the Whites. The mining is done almost exclusively by the Squaws. I have known a company of four or five Squaws to obtain as much as \$8. in one day. With this they purchase flour & beef & most generally of the worst that there is in Market.—Meat that can not be sold to others is sold to them.

The men are very indolent spending their time mostly laying about camp. Formerly they exercised more in search of game. Now there is no game since the settlements of the Whites. The Deer which were in the greatest abundance around their camps are now entirely driven off or killed. The Hares & Quail are mostly destroyed by the White man, and now the country is entirely without game up on which the Indian can at all subsist. They hunt but little therefore, and seldom kill anything but a few squirrels. They have nothing to [do]. When their Squaws fail to bring them enough to eat they will go around the ranches in the country & kitchens in towns & beg something to eat. In the counties I have visited all the streams are mining streams & the water is constantly muddy which drives all the fish out.

Prior to 1849 in one weeks fishing on the Yuba & its tributaries in the fall season the Warriors would kill enough fish to last them through the Winter. These were dried & packed in their huts to be used when wanted in the Winter. At present there are no fish in the streams. A few Warriors visited the shoals in the Yuba near Col. Brofitts ranch this past fall for the purpose of fishing, but I am informed that they could eat them as fast as they caught them. This source of subsistence is entirely destroyed. Another great source of suffering among the Indians arises from the singular, & to the Indian unaccountable fact that the crop of acorns have failed

completely for the last three years. The acorns formerly furnished them an abundant supply of Bread & that without any trouble to them. They think this is very strange & wonder much Why the Oaks bear no more. The present season a few acorns are to be found in the foot hills in Yuba County. Not one has been seen in Nevada & Sierra Counties.

and friendship meant little. The following speech was met by shouts of approval from the Kiowas but, said Stanley, "produced a rather blank look upon the faces of the Peace Commissioners."⁶

SATANTA

Speech at the Treaty of Medicine Lodge

The Commissioners have come from afar to listen to our grievances. My heart is glad, and I shall hide nothing from you. I understood that you were coming down here to see us. I moved away from those disposed to war, and I also came from afar to see you. The Kiowas and Comanches have not been fighting. We were away down south when we heard that you were coming to see us.

The Cheyennes are those who have been fighting with you. They did it in broad daylight, so that all could see them. If I had been fighting I would have done so also. Two years ago I made peace with General Harney, Sanborn, and Colonel Leavenworth at the mouth of the Little Arkansas. That peace I have never broken. When the grass was growing this spring, a large body of soldiers came along on the Santa Fe road. I had not done anything, and therefore was not afraid.

All the chiefs of the Kiowas, Comanches, and Arapahoes are here to-day. They have come to listen to the good word. We have been waiting here a long time to see you, and we are getting tired. All the land south of the Arkansas belongs to the Kiowas and Comanches, and I don't want to give away any of it. I love the land and the buffalo, and will not part with any. I want you to understand also that the Kiowas don't want to fight, and have not been fighting since we made the treaty. I hear a good deal of fine talk from these gentlemen, but they never do what they say. I don't want any of these medicine homes built in the country; I want the papooses brought up just exactly as I am. When I make peace it is a long and lasting one; there is no end to it. We thank you for your presents.

Henry M. Stanley, *My Early Travels and Adventures in America and Asia* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Co., 1895), 1:247-49.

All these chiefs and head men feel happy. They will do what you want. They know that you are doing the best you can. I and they will do so also. There is one big chief lately died — Jim Pockmark, of the Caddoes — he was a great peacemaker, and we are sorry he is dead.

When I look upon you I know you are all big chiefs. While you are in the country we go to sleep happy, and are not afraid. I have heard that you intend to settle us on a reservation near the mountains. I don't want to settle there. I love to roam over the wide prairie, and when I do it I feel free and happy, but when we settle down, we grow pale and die.

Hearken well to what I say. I have laid aside my lance, my bow, and my shield, and yet I feel safe in your presence. I have told you the truth. I have no little lies hid about me, but I don't know how it is with the Commissioners; are they as clear as I am? A long time ago this land belonged to our fathers, but when I go up to the river I see a camp of soldiers, and they are cutting my wood down, or killing my buffalo. I don't like that, and when I see it my heart feels like bursting with sorrow. I have spoken.

"I WANT TO LIVE AND DIE AS I WAS BROUGHT UP."

Ten Bears, the gray-haired old head chief of the Yampatika Comanches, was one of the most influential men on the southern plains. He told the commissioners at Medicine Lodge, "What I say is law for the Comanches, but it takes half-a-dozen to speak for the Kiowas." After a heated argument with Santanta, the old Comanche succeeded even in silencing the loquacious Kiowa.⁷ Ten Bears had visited President Lincoln in Washington in 1863 and had become a consistent advocate of peace. He wore gold-rimmed spectacles as he addressed the commissioners. Some versions of Ten Bears's speech are more embellished than the one reprinted here as recorded by Henry Stanley.

TEN BEARS

Speech at the Treaty of Medicine Lodge

My people do not trouble the white man at all; but two years ago, on this road, your soldiers commenced killing my young men, and on the Canadian also. My young men returned the fire, and fought your soldiers. Your men then attacked our villages; we retorted as well as we could, but we finally made peace, and there was an end of it. We have been at peace since.

There is one thing which is not good in your speeches; that is, building us medicine houses. We don't want any. I want to live and die as I was brought up. I love the open prairie, and I wish you would not insist on putting us on a reservation. We prefer to roam over the prairie when we want to do so. If the Texans were kept from our country, then we might live upon a reserve, but this country is so small we cannot live upon it. The best of my lands the Texans have taken, and I am left to shift as I can best do. If you have any good words from the Great Father I shall be happy to hear them. I love to get presents, for it reminds me that the Great Father has not forgotten his friends the Comanches. I want my country to be pure and clean.

"TEACH US THE ROAD TO TRAVEL."

Satank, or Sitting Bear, was a prominent Kiowa chief and medicine man, a warrior and a peacemaker. He had played a major role in bringing about the great peace between the Kiowas and the Cheyennes in 1840. Unlike Satanta, Satank kept his own counsel through most of the proceedings at Medicine Lodge. When he did speak, however, bidding the Americans farewell, he moved treaty commissioners and newspaper correspondents alike with the power of his words. One reporter, no friend of Indians, said he had sat through stirring speeches in Congress and fiery sermons from pulpits, but "never have I known true eloquence before this day."⁸ The speech was reprinted in full in the *New York Tribune* on November 30, 1867.

Henry M. Stanley, *My Early Travels and Adventures in America and Asia* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston and Co., 1895), 1:252-53.

SATANK

Speech at the Treaty of Medicine Lodge

It has made me glad to meet you, who are the commissioners of the Great Father. You no doubt are tired of the much talk of our people. Many of them have put themselves forward and filled you with their sayings. I have kept back and said nothing, not that I did not consider myself still the principal chief of the Kiowa nation, but others, younger than I, desired to talk, and I left it to them. Before leaving, however, as I now intend to go, I come to say that the Kiowas and Comanches have made with you a peace, and they intend to keep it. It brings prosperity to us, we, of course, will like it better. If it brings poverty and adversity we will not abandon it. It is our contract and it shall stand.

Our people once carried on war against Texas. We thought the Great Father would not be offended, for the Texans had gone out from among his people and become his enemies. You now tell us they have made peace and returned to the great family. The Kiowa and Comanche will now make no bloody trail in their land. They have pledged their word, and that word shall last unless the whites shall break their contract and invite the horrors of war.

We do not break treaties. We make but few contracts, and then we remember well. The whites make so many they are liable to forget them. The white chief seems not to be able to govern his braves. The Great Father seems powerless in the face of his children. He sometimes becomes angry when he sees the wrongs of his people committed on the red man, and his voice becomes loud as the roaring winds. But, like the wind, it soon dies away, and leaves the sullen calm of unheeded oppression. We hope now that a better time has come.

If all would talk and then do as you have done, the sun of peace would shine forever. We have warred against the white man, but never because it gave us pleasure. Before the day of oppression came, no white man came to our villages and went away hungry. It gave us more joy to share with him than it gave him to partake of our hospitality. In the far-distant past there was no suspicion among us. The world seemed large enough for both the red man and the white man. Its broad plains seem now to

New York Tribune, Nov. 30, 1867; reprinted in W. C. Wanderer, comp., *Indian Oratory: Famous Speeches by Noted Indian Chiefs* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 135-37.

contract, and the white man grows jealous of his red brother. He once came to trade; he comes now to fight. He once came as a citizen; he now comes as a soldier. He once put his trust in our friendship, and wanted no shield but our fidelity, but now he builds forts and plants big guns on their walls. He once gave us arms and powder, and bade us hunt the game. We then loved him for his confidence. He now suspects our plighted faith, and drives us to be his enemies. He now covers his face with a cloud of jealousy and anger, and tells us to be gone, as the offended master speaks to his dog.

We thank the Great Spirit that all these wrongs are now to cease, and the old day of peace and friendship to come again. You came as friends. You talked as friends. You have patiently heard our many complaints. To you they have seemed trifling; to us they are everything.

You have not tried, as many do, to get from us our lands for nothing. You have not tried to make a new bargain merely to get the advantage. You have not asked to make our annuities smaller; but, unasked, you have made them larger. You have not withdrawn a single gift, but voluntarily you have provided new guarantees for our education and comfort.

When we saw these things we then said, "These are the men of the past." We at once gave you our hearts. You now have them. You know what is best for us. Do for us what is best. Teach us the road to travel, and we will not depart from it forever. For your sakes the green grass shall not be stained with the blood of the whites. Your people shall again be our people, and peace shall be our mutual heritage. If wrong comes, we shall look to you for the right. We know you will not forsake us, and tell your people to be as you have been. I am old and will soon join my father, but those who come after me will remember this day. It is now treasured up by the old, and will be carried by them to the grave, and then handed down to be kept as a sacred tradition by their children and their children's children.

There is not a drop of my blood in the veins of any creature living, and when I am gone to the happy land, who will mourn for Satank? And now the time has come that I must go. Good by! You may never see me more, but remember Satank as the white man's friend!

When he had finished speaking, Satank shook hands with the commissioners, mounted his pony, and rode off into the plains. A future of peace did not await him or his people. Leaving Medicine Lodge, the American commissioners traveled north and the next spring made peace with the

SITTING BULL

Report to the Senate Committee

1883

If a man loses anything, and goes back and looks carefully for it he will find it, and that is what the Indians are doing now when they ask you to give them the things they were promised them in the past. And I do not consider that they should be treated like beasts, and that is the reason I have grown up with the feelings I have.

Whatever you wanted of me I have obeyed, and I have come when you called me. The Great Father sent me word that what ever he had against me in the past had been forgiven and thrown aside, and he would have nothing against me in the future, and I accepted his promises and came in. And he told me not to step aside from the white man's path, and I told him I would not, and I am doing my best to travel in that path.

I feel that my country has gotten a bad name, and I want it to have a good name. It used to have a good name, and I sit sometimes and wonder who it is that has given it a bad name. You are the only people now who can give it a good name, and I want you to take care of my country and respect it.

When we sold the Black Hills we got a very small price for it, and not what we ought to have received. I used to think that the size of the payments would remain the same all the time, but they are growing smaller all the time.

I want you to tell the Great Father everything I have said, and that we want some benefits from the promises he has made to us. And I don't think I should be tormented with anything about giving up any part of my land until those promises are fulfilled. I would rather wait until that time, when I will be ready to transact any business he may desire.

I consider that my country takes in the Black Hills, and runs from the Powder River to the Missouri, and that all of this land belongs to me. Our reservation is not as large as we want it to be, and I suppose the Great Father owes us money now for land he has taken from us in the past.

You white men advise us to follow your ways, and therefore I talk as I do. When you have a piece of land, and anything trespasses on it, you catch it and keep it until you get damages, and I am doing the same thing now. And I want you to tell this to the Great Father for me. I am looking



Figure 26. Sitting Bull
This photograph was taken about the time of Sitting Bull's meeting with the Senate select committee in 1883.

into the future for the benefit of my children, and that is what I mean, when I say I want my country taken care of for me.

My children will grow up here, and I am looking ahead for their benefit and for the benefit of my children's children, too; and even beyond that again. I sit here and look around me now, and I see my people starving, and I want the Great Father to make an increase in the amount of food that is allowed us now, so that they may be able to live. We want cattle to butcher — I want you to kill 300 head of cattle at a time. That is the way you live and we want to live the same way. This is what I want you to tell the Great Father when you go back home.

If we get the things we want, our children will be raised like the white children. When the Great Father told me to live like his people I told him to send me six teams of mules, because that is the way white people make to a living, and I wanted my children to have these things to help them to make a living. I also told him to send me two spans of horses with wagons, and everything else my children would need. I also asked for a horse and buggy for my children. I was advised to follow the ways of the white man, and that is why I asked for those things.

I never ask for anything that is not needed. I also asked for a cow and a bull for each family, so that they can raise cattle of their own. I asked for four yokes of oxen and wagons with them. Also a yoke of oxen and a wagon for each of my children to haul wood with.

It is your own doing that I am here. You sent me here, and advised me to live as you do, and it is not right for me to live in poverty. I asked the Great Father for hogs, male and female, and for male and female sheep for my children to raise from. I did not leave out anything in the way of animals that the white men have; I asked for every one of them. I want you to tell the Great Father to send me some agricultural implements, so that I will not be obliged to work bare-handed.

Whatever he sends to this agency our agent will take care of for us, and we will be satisfied because we know he will keep everything right. Whatever is sent here for us he will be pleased to take care of for us. I want to tell you that our rations have been reduced to almost nothing, and many of the people have starved to death.

Now I beg of you to have the amount of rations increased so that our children will not starve, but will live better than they do now. I want clothing, too, and I will ask for that, too. We want all kinds of clothing for our people. Look at the men around here and see how poorly dressed they are. We want some clothing this month, and when it gets cold we want more to protect us from the weather.

That is all I have to say.