

them. My father gave me good talk about our tribe. He liked to speak of those things. Now the Winnebagoes are poor. They have not so much pride. Very few of them care about the old times. Most of them care only for fire-water. We get a very poor living, now. Our farms have not good soil. The game is not as plenty as it was. The white traders cheat and rob us. They make our young men drunk. It would be better if we had an agent.¹ We think the Big Father does not care for us any longer, now that he has all our best land. Perhaps it will not be long before he will want the poor land we now live on. Then we must go to the reservation.² Life on the reservation is hard. The Winnebagoes in Wisconsin do not want to go there. They want to die on their own land. They like best the streams and woods where their fathers and uncles have always hunted and trapped. If we had an agent given us, we would do better. My people are like children, and need to be looked after. They want to be encouraged. I am too old to travel much; but some day I will go and see the captain at the Four Lakes.³ I will ask him to see the Big Father, and procure for us an agent who shall be a good man.⁴ We had better have no agent, than such as I hear they sometimes have on the reservation.

¹ In 1886, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs recommended to Congress the appointment of an agent for the Wisconsin Winnebagoes, but no action was taken. See remarks on this subject, in article, "Wisconsin Winnebagoes," in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xii.—ED.

² In Dakota county, Nebr., where about half of the Winnebago tribe are now living.—ED.

³ Meaning the governor of Wisconsin, at Madison. "Taychoperah" (literally, *four lakes*) is the old Winnebago name for the country round about Madison.—ED.

⁴ In June, 1887, Spoon Decorah, Four Deer, and Doctor Decorah, with a half-breed interpreter, John la Ronde, of Portage, came to Madison upon this errand, but Governor Rusk was not in the city at the time, and they failed to see him. The party spent the day in the State Historical Society's rooms in the capitol, and then left for home. This was Spoon's last visit to Madison, for in the succeeding autumn he died.—ED.