

For the Record

'The Quality of Mercy'

*From remarks before the Senate
by Sen. James Abourezk (D.-S.D.)
Sept. 9:*

In February of 1973, a little over a year and a half ago, a group of Sioux Indians, just prior to the Wounded Knee takeover and occupation, went to the town of Custer, South Dakota, to engage in a protest against what they considered to be unfair treatment of an Indian who had been stabbed and killed by a non-Indian. The non-Indian had not been charged with any serious crime.

During the course of the protest, the Chamber of Commerce building and a part of the courthouse in Custer, South Dakota, were burned. As a result of that action, a number of people were charged with rioting and with arson and from those charges, an Indian woman by the name of Sarah Bad Heart Bull was

convicted, just this year, of taking part in the riot. She was sentenced to an indeterminate sentence of 1 to 5 years.

Although Sarah has no husband and she has 5 children, she was given 24 hours by the judge to take care of her affairs before she went to prison.

In addition to that, Sarah Bad Heart Bull was denied bond pending appeal of her case. Because Sarah Bad Heart Bull has no friends in high places, no money and no power, she is now in prison. I do not know whether her lawyer is being paid or whether he is working *pro bono*.

With all of the explanations given for the pardon of Richard Nixon, and with the new definitions of the quality of mercy, I would hope that someone could define to Sarah Bad Heart Bull and to her family the new definition of mercy, because I am unable to do so.

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