

L E T T E R
FROM THE
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING,

In answer to a Senate resolution of April 19, 1876, a copy of the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in relation to the present situation of Indian disturbances in the Sioux reservation.

APRIL 26, 1876.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, April 25, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the following resolution passed by the Senate April 19, 1876:

“Resolved, That the Secretary of the Interior be directed to communicate to the Senate any information in his possession in relation to the present situation of Indian disturbances in the Sioux reservation, or unceded Indian territory of said Sioux, and whether military force has been interposed therein; and, if so, whether at the instance of the Interior Department, and the reasons for such interposition.”

In answer to said resolution, I transmit, herewith, copy of report, dated the 22d instant, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, together with accompanying copies of papers therein referred to.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
Z. CHANDLER,

Secretary.

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C., April 22, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by reference from the Department, of United States Senate resolution of April 19, 1876, which directs the Secretary of the Interior “to communicate to the Senate any information in his possession in relation to the present situation of Indian disturbances in the Sioux reservation, or unceded territory of said Sioux, and whether military force has been interposed therein, and, if so, whether at the instance of the Interior Department, and the reasons for such interposition.”

Assuming that the disturbances alluded to are those arising out of the course pursued for a long time past by lawless Indians under the leadership of the notorious Sioux chief Sitting Bull, in Western Dakota and Eastern Montana, I beg leave to say that this Office has but meager information in regard to the present situation of the troubles with these Indians.

Herewith I transmit a copy of the correspondence on file here, showing the measures adopted by mutual understanding between the War and Interior Departments for inducing, as well as compelling, if need be, Sitting Bull and his followers to go upon their reservation in Dakota and remain there. It will be seen that the insolent and destructive attitude of these Indians rendered the use of military force a necessity. For the maintenance of good order and the protection of the whites, an order had been issued by this Department in December, 1875, that these troublesome and defiant Indians should go upon their reservation by the 31st of January last, or they would be regarded as hostile, and so treated by the military. As this order, which had been communicated to them by couriers from several of the Indian agencies, seemed to be utterly disregarded, this Office, taking into consideration the opinion of the General and Lieutenant-General of the Army, that a movement against them would be entirely practicable, and inferring that the force at command would be sufficient to restrain the Sioux Indians now at the several agencies from an outbreak, as a diversion in favor of the hostiles, on the 21st of January, ultimo, in a report to the Department, expressed the conviction that enough had been done to fully commit the Department to the policy of force should the hostile bands further refuse to comply with its order. Acting upon that report, the Department, under date of the 1st of February, ultimo, communicated with the Secretary of War, and turned over these Indians to his Department for appropriate action by the Army; and, on the 3d of said month, the Secretary of War replied that the Adjutant-General had directed the General of the Army to take immediate measures to compel the Indians to return to; and remain upon, their reservation.

As to the result of the military expedition against these Indians, this Office has no other information than that furnished in reports from Agents Hastings and Howard, respectively in charge of the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies in Nebraska, and Agent Clapp, of the Crow agency in Montana, all having some bearing upon the subject, and of which copies are herewith submitted.

The resolution of the Senate is herewith returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. Q. SMITH,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

List of the papers accompanying the foregoing report and referred to therein.

1. Copy of report from E. C. Walkins, United States Indian inspector, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, November 9, 1875.
2. Copy of report from Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, November 27, 1875.
3. Copy of letter from the Secretary of the Interior to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 3, 1875.

4. Copy of letter from Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Agent J. S. Hastings, Red Cloud agency, December 6, 1875.
5. Copy of letter from the Secretary of War to the Secretary of the Interior, and of accompanying papers, January 12, 1876.
6. Copy of letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, January 21, 1876.
7. Copy of letter from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of War, February 1, 1876.
8. Copy of letter from the Secretary of War to the Secretary of the Interior, February 3, 1876.
9. Copy of report from Agent D. E. Clapp, Crow agency, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 10, 1876.
10. Copy of report from Agent E. A. Howard, Spotted Tail agency, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 1, 1876.
11. Copy of report from Agent J. S. Hastings, Red Cloud agency, to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, April 3, 1876.

1.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *November 9, 1875.*

SIR: I have the honor to address you in relation to the attitude and condition of certain wild and hostile bands of Sioux Indians in Dakota and Montana, that came under my observation during my recent tour through their country, and what I think should be the policy of the Government toward them.

I refer to Sitting Bull's band and other bands of the Sioux Nation, under chiefs or "head-men" of less note, but no less untamable and hostile. These Indians occupy the center, so to speak, and roam over Western Dakota and Eastern Montana, including the rich valleys of the Yellowstone and Powder Rivers, and make war on the Arickarees, Mandans, Gros Ventres, Assinaboines, Blackfeet, Piegans, Crows, and other friendly tribes on the circumference.

Their country is probably the best hunting-ground in the United States, "a paradise" for Indians, affording game in such variety and abundance that the need of Government supplies is not felt. Perhaps for this reason, they have never accepted aid or been brought under control. They openly set at defiance all law and authority, and boast that the United States authorities are not strong enough to conquer them. The United States troops are held in contempt, and, surrounded by their native mountains, relying on their knowledge of the country and powers of endurance, they laugh at the futile efforts that have thus far been made to subjugate them, and scorn the idea of white civilization.

They are lofty and independent in their attitude and language to Government officials, as well as the whites generally, and claim to be the sovereign rulers of the land. They say they own the wood, the water, the ground, and the air, and that white men live in or pass through their country but by their sufferance.

They are rich in horses and robes, and are thoroughly armed. Nearly every warrior carries a breech-loading gun, a pistol, a bow and quiver of arrows. From their central position they strike to the east, north, and west, steal horses, and plunder from all the surrounding tribes, as well as frontier settlers, and luckless white hunters, or emigrants who are not in sufficient force to resist them, and fortunate, in-

deed, is the man who thus meets them, if, after losing all his worldly possessions, he escapes with his scalp.

And yet these Indians number, all told, but a few hundred warriors, and these are never all together, or under the control of one chief.

In my judgment, one thousand men, under the command of an experienced officer, sent into their country in the winter, when the Indians are nearly always in camp, and at which season of the year they are the most helpless, would be amply sufficient for their capture or punishment.

The Government has done everything that can be done, peacefully to get control of these Indians, or to induce them to respect its authority. Every effort has been made, but all to no purpose. They are still as wild and untamable, as uncivilized and savage, as when Lewis and Clark first passed through their country.

The injurious effects of the repeated attacks made by these bands on the peaceful, friendly tribes heretofore mentioned cannot be over-estimated. No people can reasonably be expected to make progress in the arts of peace, if they must be constantly armed, and prepared to defend their houses and property. No Indians can be expected to "civilize," to learn to cultivate the soil, or the mechanic arts, if, while they have the implements of labor in one hand, they must carry the gun in the other for self-defense. Their natural instincts come to the surface at once, and the Indian agent or missionary who is zealously laboring for the advancement of the people under his care, and to carry out the humane policy of our Government, the only policy worthy an enlightened Christian nation, finds his labors vastly increased and discouragements multiplied by this state of affairs.

These wild bands are but as a drop in the bucket in number compared to the great body of Indians who have accepted the peaceful policy, made treaties with the Government, and are keeping them, or have been supplied with provisions, goods, and farming-implements, without treaty stipulations, and are under the care of agents, friendly, and making fair progress in the way of civilization. In interviews with the Indians along the Missouri River and through Montana, during my recent tour of inspection, they invariably spoke of this subject, and complained bitterly that the Government was not protecting them as it had promised, and frequently closed the case by saying "they might just as well go out and kill white men, as to try to be good Indians, for they get no protection or extra reward for being good." When I told them the Sioux would be punished, they said, "We have heard that before; we'll wait and see." While I am not disposed to be needlessly alarmed, and do not agree with the writers of articles published in numerous territorial papers of a sensational character on this subject, yet I think there is danger of some of the young warriors from friendly tribes falling off and joining with these hostile bands, until, with these accessions, they would be somewhat formidable, and might make a simultaneous attack on the white settlers in some localities, if they are thus allowed to gather head.

The true policy, in my judgment, is to send troops against them in the winter—the sooner the better—and whip them into subjection. They richly merit the punishment for their incessant warfare on friendly tribes, their continuous thieving, and their numerous murders of white settlers and their families, or white men wherever found unarmed.

The Government owes it, too, to these friendly tribes, in fulfillment of treaty stipulations. It owes it to the agents and employes, whom it has sent to labor among the Indians at remote and almost inaccessible

places, beyond the reach of aid, in time to save. It owes it to the frontier settlers, who have, with their families, braved the dangers and hardships incident to pioneer life. It owes it to civilization and the common cause of humanity.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. C. WATKINS,
United States Indian Inspector.

Hon. E. P. SMITH,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

2.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE INDIAN AFFAIRS,

November 27, 1875.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith, inclosed, a special report from E. C. Watkins, United States Indian inspector, dated the 9th instant, in relation to the status and condition of certain wild and lawless bands of Sioux Indians, giving an expression of his views in reference to the future action of the Government toward them.

Inspector Watkins refers to Sitting Bull's band, and others, who roam over Western Dakota and Eastern Montana, including the rich valley of the Yellowstone and Powder Rivers, and make war on the Arickarees, Mandans, Gros Ventres, Assinaboines, Blackfeet, Piegans, Crows, and other friendly tribes; and he suggests, for reasons stated by him, that one thousand men, under the command of an experienced officer, be sent into the country of these hostile Indians (numbering but a few hundred) during the winter season, and compel them to submit to the authority of the Government.

I respectfully recommend that this communication be referred to the War Department for consideration and such action as may be deemed best by Lieutenant-General Sheridan, who is personally conversant with the situation on the Upper Missouri, and with the relations of Sitting Bull's band to the other Sioux tribes.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDW. P. SMITH,
Commissioner.

THE HON. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

3.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Washington, December 3, 1875.

SIR: Referring to your communication of the 27th ultimo, relative to the status of certain Sioux Indians residing without the bounds of their reservation, and their continued hostile attitude toward the whites, I have to request that you direct the Indian agents at all the Sioux agencies in Dakota, and at Fort Peck, Montana, to notify said Indians that unless they shall remove within the bounds of their reservation (and remain there) before the 31st of January next, they shall be deemed hostile, and treated accordingly by the military force.

Please instruct said agents to acknowledge the receipt of your order, and notify you of the execution of it.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. CHANDLER,
Secretary.

The COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.

4.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE INDIAN AFFAIRS,
December 6, 1875.

SIR: I am instructed by the honorable Secretary of the Interior, under date of the 3d instant, to direct you to notify Sitting Bull's band, and other wild and lawless bands of Sioux Indians residing without the bounds of their reservation, who roam over Western Dakota, and Eastern Montana, including the rich valley of the Yellowstone and Powder Rivers, and make war on the Arickarees, Mandans, Gros Ventres, Assinaboines, Blackfeet, Piegans, Crows, and other friendly tribes, that unless they shall remove within the bounds of their reservation (and remain there) before the 31st of January next, they shall be deemed hostile, and treated accordingly by the military force.

You will acknowledge the receipt of this order, and notify this Office of the execution of it.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDW. P. SMITH,
Commissioner.

J. S. HASTINGS, Esq.,

United States Indian Agent, Red Cloud Agency, Nebraska.

Letter to the same effect addressed the same day to Agents Howard, Bingham, Burke, Livingstone, Beckwith, Reily, and Alderson.

5.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, January 12, 1876.

SIR: Referring to a previous correspondence with your Department on the subject of the appearance of hostile bands of Sioux outside their reservation, I have now the honor to transmit copy of a report of the commanding general, Division of the Missouri, concerning these Indians, and to invite your attention to the request of General Sheridan, concurred in by the General of the Army, that should operations against them be determined upon, he may be so advised as speedily as possible.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. T. CROSBY, *Chief Clerk.*

(For the Secretary of War, in his absence.)

The Hon. the SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Indorsements on copy of correspondence concerning status of certain wild bands of Sioux, covering report of Indian Inspector Watkins.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, December 11, 1875.

Official copies, respectfully referred through headquarters of the Army to commanding general Military Division of the Missouri.

By order of the Secretary of War:

E. D. TOWNSEND,
Adjutant-General.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Saint Louis, December 13, 1875.

Respectfully referred to Lieutenant-General P. H. Sheridan, commanding Division of the Missouri, for report as to the plausibility of military operations against Sitting Bull and his tribe, this winter.

By command of General Sherman:

A. McD. MCCOOK,
Colonel and A. D. C.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Saint Louis, Mo., January 7, 1876.

Respectfully returned to the Secretary of War, inviting attention to General Sheridan's letter, herewith inclosed. Midwinter is the best time to strike hostile Indians in the latitude of the Yellowstone, but we should have timely notice of the object to be accomplished and the means for its attainment.

W. T. SHERMAN, *General.*

[Inclosure to preceding indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, Illinois, January 4, 1876.

GENERAL: I have the honor to reply to your request as indorsed on certain papers, forwarded from the Secretary of the Interior, requesting military operations against Sioux Indians, in case they refuse to occupy the reservation assigned them by the Indian Bureau, on or before the 31st day of January, 1876. * * *

As Generals Terry and Crook command the departments in which these hostile Indians are located, I respectfully forward their opinions on the subject.

General Terry is of the opinion that Sitting Bull's band of hostile Indians is encamped at or near the mouth of Little Missouri, and that it can be reached by a quick movement, which may be decisive at this season of the year, and that he has sufficient troops and means to make such a movement.

General Crook is of the opinion that operations can be undertaken in his department against bands of hostile Sioux Indians whenever, in the opinion of the Indian Bureau, such action becomes necessary.

As the commands of these two officers embrace all the Indians against whom military action was contemplated, it will be seen that the movement is considered practicable, and I earnestly request, should operations be determined upon, that directions to that effect be communi-

cated to me as speedily as possible, so that the enemy may be taken at the greatest disadvantage.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General.

General W. T. SHERMAN,
Headquarters of the Army, Saint Louis, Mo.

6.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE INDIAN AFFAIRS,
January 21, 1876.

SIR: By Department reference of the 13th instant, I am in receipt of communication from the honorable the Secretary of War, inviting attention to the indorsement of Lieutenant-General Sheridan (therewith inclosed) that, should operations against the hostile bands of Sioux outside their reservation be determined on, the military may be so advised as speedily as possible.

From this indorsement, it appears to be the opinion of the accomplished officers under whose immediate supervision any movement against these Indians would be conducted—an opinion in which the General and Lieutenant-General of the Army concur—that such a movement at this season of the year is entirely practicable.

I am disposed to believe, also, although the question is not specifically raised by these papers, that the officers whose opinions are thus given have no doubt as to this ability to restrain, with the troops at their command, any possible outbreak (by way of a diversion in favor of Sitting Bull and the Indians who will be the direct objects of the attack) of the bands of Sioux now at the several agencies.

In compliance with your directions, I have the honor to report that the indorsement of Lieutenant-General Sheridan, above mentioned, was called out by a communication from this Office of November 27th last, in which the then Commissioner invited attention to the trouble which Sitting Bull and other lawless Sioux ranging over certain parts of Dakota and Montana were giving to friendly Indians and white settlers within their reach, this communication having been referred by you, in compliance with his recommendation, to the War Department.

Since the date of this communication, viz, on the 6th ultimo, my predecessor, acting under your instructions, directed the agents at the Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, Lower Brulé, Crow Creek, Cheyenne River, Standing Rock, Devil's Lake, and Fort Peck agencies to communicate, if practicable, to Sitting Bull and the other hostile Indians the requirements of the Government that they return within the bounds of their reservation on or before the 31st instant. Agent Howard, of the Spotted Tail agency, reported, under date of the 3d instant, his belief that their demands had by that time reached the northern camps, and that Sitting Bull is fully advised of the intentions of the Government.

Some of the agents named have not been heard from in regard to this matter, while no one has, as yet, clearly expressed a belief concurrent with that of Agent Howard. In my opinion, however, enough has been done to fully commit the Department to the policy of restraining, by force of arms, any further outbreak or insubordination on the part of these defiant and hostile bands, should they refuse to comply before the 31st instant with the demands thus made upon them. Certainly I can conceive of nothing more damaging to the authority of the Government,

not yet fully recognized by other bands of Sioux, than a failure to execute threats of military operations so clearly made.

In further execution of the policy thus determined upon, and with a desire to afford the fullest information to all officers interested, I directed, on the 19th instant, the agents at the Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, Standing Rock, and Cheyenne River agencies, who would in my view be most likely to obtain reliable and early news of Sitting Bull's intentions and movements, to keep me fully advised by letter and telegraph of his acceptance or rejection of the conditions imposed upon him, or of any other intelligence concerning him.

Any information which I may receive in compliance with these instructions will be forwarded without delay to you, for transmission to the honorable the Secretary of War.

The communication of the honorable the Secretary of War is herewith returned.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. Q. SMITH,
Commissioner.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

7.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., February 1, 1876.

SIR: On the 3d December last I had the honor to address a communication to you relative to the hostile Sioux roaming in the Powder River country, under the leadership of Sitting Bull, informing you that I had directed couriers to be sent from each of the Sioux agencies, informing that chief that he must come in with his followers to one of the Sioux agencies, before the 31st ultimo, prepared to remain in peace near the agency, or he would be turned over to the War Department, and the Army be directed to compel him to comply with the orders of this Department.

The time given him in which to return to an agency having expired, and the advices received at the Indian Office being to the effect that Sitting Bull still refuses to comply with the directions of the Commissioner, the said Indians are hereby turned over to the War Department for such action on the part of the Army as you may deem proper under the circumstances.

I inclose copy of communication from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated the 21st ultimo, recommending that hostilities be commenced.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Z. CHANDLER,
Secretary.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF WAR.

8.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, February 3, 1876.

SIR: Acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 1st instant stating that the time given Sitting Bull and his followers to repair to an

agency having expired, and this chief still refuses to comply with the directions of the Commissioner, and turning over the case to the War Department, in accordance with the recommendation of the Indian Bureau that hostilities be commenced against these Indians, I have the honor to inform you that the Adjutant-General has directed the General of the Army to take immediate measures to compel these Indians to return to and remain upon their reservation, as requested by your Department.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. W. BELKNAP,
Secretary of War.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

9.

CROW AGENCY, MONTANA,
March 10, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith a report of murders and outrages committed by Sioux Indians in the valley of the Yellowstone since the first of last July.

It shows seventeen attacks made by them on parties of whites; nine white men killed and ten wounded, besides a large amount of property stolen or destroyed.

I estimate that they interfered with the building of this agency last summer to the amount of four to six thousand dollars. This is not a new condition of things. For several years, the eastern settlements of Montana have been harassed regularly every summer in the same manner. In fact, a regular predatory warfare has been carried on by the Sioux, and by Sioux that are receiving Government supplies.

The party that stole the agency horses and mules last summer left in the corral a blanket with the United States Indian Department brand. The party that attacked the agency train on July 2 and killed José Trojio, left flour-sacks bearing the brand of the United States inspector of Indian Department flour, (Clarkson.)

There is another very important consideration. The Crows have always been fast friends of the whites, and have largely assisted in protecting the eastern settlements of Montana.

The Sioux are now occupying the eastern and best portion of their reservation, and by their constant warfare paralyzing all efforts to induce the Crows to undertake agriculture or other means of self-support.

I respectfully ask attention to the importance of establishing a military post, or at least a summer camp, on the Yellowstone, near the mouth of the Big Horn.

There are fourteen companies stationed in Montana, in the district of which Fort Shaw is the headquarters, most of them at points where no hostile Indians have appeared for a long time. I think it will be evident to every person who is acquainted with the character and topography of the country that if several of these companies were stationed at the mouth of the Big Horn, and the others at Ellis and the forks of the Musselshell, complete protection could be afforded to the settlements, and the notorious Sitting Bull band of Sioux held in check. As it is, not only are men murdered and property destroyed every year, and

the permanent good intended to the friendly Crows prevented, but large tracts of the best agricultural and pasture lands of Montana are made uninhabitable.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
DEXTER E. CLAPP, *Agent.*

Hon. J. Q. SMITH,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

P. S.—I open this to add that four Crows who accompanied General Brisbin's expedition to the mouth of the Big Horn, and remained behind, have just come in, and report that a very large force of Sioux are moving up the north bank of the Yellowstone. Nearly all the Crows have come in much earlier than usual, and report that they expect the Sioux to attack this agency and themselves in large force. They say they have received word from Fort Peck to that effect.

10.

SPOTTED TAIL AGENCY, NEBRASKA,
April 1, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to submit this my monthly report of affairs at this agency for March, 1876:

* * * * *

During the month there was considerable drunkenness among the white and half-breed men, caused by liquor from Camp Sheridan, and I am very apprehensive that serious consequences will follow unless the sale of liquor be stopped.

I am informed that the internal-revenue officer at Cheyenne has issued license to sell liquor in Custer City, Dakota.

I have just read in a Cheyenne paper, "telegram of General George Crook, Fort Reno, March 22, 1876, stating that the village of Crazy Horse was attacked by the troops and destroyed on the 17th, finding it a perfect magazine of ammunition, war-material, and general supplies, and every evidence was found to prove that these Indians are in copartnership with those at the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies, and that the proceeds of their raids upon the settlements had been taken to these agencies and supplies brought out in return." And further: "In this connection I would again urgently recommend the immediate transfer of these agencies to the Missouri."

Now, many unkind remarks find their way into the newspapers, and very few encouraging words for the successful efforts we have made for the civilization of these Indians. They are to-day, and have been for months, one of the best-behaved communities in the country, and that their improvement is not due to military influence is shown in the annual reports and in the reports of the Board of Indian Commissioners of 1875.

I here desire officially to state that very few Northern Indians have been here since the grand council of September last. No proceeds of raids upon settlements have been brought here; no supplies taken north in return. No arms have been sold by the agency trader to Indians for more than two years past, and but little ammunition; and, for two months, none of either.

Very few, if any, of these Indians have been north this season, and I have heard of none who were in copartnership with those of the north.

I respectfully suggest that General Crook be requested to produce some of the abundant evidence which he found.

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I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. A. HOWARD,
United States Indian Agent.

Hon. COMMISSIONER INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, D. C.

11.

RED CLOUD AGENCY, NEBRASKA,
April 3, 1876.

SIR: I have the honor to report that I have been on duty here during the month of March, 1876.

The Indians belonging here, who had been north to the buffalo, continued to arrive up to the last of the month. I am of the opinion that there are but few yet to come in; had there been food to issue them on their arrival, it would have been some satisfaction, but to find a comparatively empty warehouse and a limited supply of beef, the outlook was certainly discouraging, though they have showed no signs of ugliness. I have succeeded in keeping them in good spirits, and under control, by telling them that every effort was being made by the Department to procure for them more food. The last beef, consisting of about two-thirds of a regular ten days' allowance, was issued March 31.

I learn from one of the half-breed scouts, who was with Crook's expedition against the hostile camp, that it was a complete failure, with the exception of the killing of an old squaw and two children, and the destruction of about forty lodges, with a loss to the troops of four killed and six wounded. Seven hundred Indian ponies were captured, but were recaptured on the following day, with the exception of about seventy head. A dozen or more officers have been placed in arrest for cowardice, and the command have returned to the railroad.

Sensational newspaper reports from an Army officer correspondent with the expedition, to the effect that the Indians whom they encountered had "mines of ammunition and abundance of supplies, with evidences of having been procured from this and Spotted Tail agency," are very much exaggerated, and, I think, in the most part untrue. Five pounds of powder, twenty of lead, and six boxes of percussion-caps comprised all the ammunition that was found in the abandoned camp. It is generally known throughout this country that the "hostiles" do the principal part of their trading at points on the Missouri River. The agency Indians appear to take but little interest in what has transpired north; but the disastrous result may have a tendency to awaken the old feeling of superiority.

I have experienced no difficulty whatever in taking the census, but have been somewhat delayed on account of the weather. I expect to have it completed in about a week.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAS. S. HASTINGS,
United States Indian Agent.

Hon. J. Q. SMITH,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.