

there to seek for plunder and scalps in the Department of the Platte, south of them, where the frontier settlements were much more progressed and exposed.

"In order to better control the Indians making these raids, for two or three years it was recommended to establish a large military post in the country known as the Black Hills, so that by holding an interior point in the heart of the country, the troops could threaten the villages and stock of the Indians if the latter raided the settlements. With the consent of the President, the Honorable Secretary of War, the General of the Army and the Honorable Secretary of the Interior, the latter having exclusive control of Indian affairs, the Division Commander was authorized to make a military reconnoissance into the country about which only dreamy stories had hitherto been told. Fort Laramie, Wyoming, about one hundred miles from the Black Hills, was first selected as the point from which to fit out the expedition, but after two visits in person to that post, the Division Commander found the temper of the Indians in that vicinity such that an expedition from there would probably provoke hostilities, so attention was turned to Fort A. Lincoln, at the end of the Northern Pacific Railroad, as the next most suitable point of departure, though the distance was much greater than from Fort Laramie. General Terry was directed to organize a strong expedition and place it under the command of Lieutenant Colonel G. A. Custer, 7th Cavalry, who was regarded as especially fitted for such an undertaking. The reconnoissance was eminently successful, the country of the Black Hills was found to contain plenty of fine timber, considerable good soil and an abundance of water and grass. Gold was also discovered by the expedition, leading to a subsequent rush of miners and others who were with difficulty restrained from a general invasion of the Black Hills country. Upon the very satisfactory reports of this reconnoissance, the recommendation for the establishment of a large military post in that section was earnestly renewed, but unfortunately for the subsequent history of Indian affairs, the construction of a post was not authorized until several years later,