

frontiers, is found in the following extract from the annual report of Lieutenant General P. H. Sheridan for 1875.

"In the Department of Dakota, the military have had the double duty of protecting the settlements from the raids of hostile Indians, and the Black Hills country from occupation by miners attracted there by real or imaginary mineral wealth in the soil. The troops in the Department of the Platte have been mostly engaged in the same manner as those of the Department of Dakota.

"I earnestly recommend some action which will settle this Black Hills question, and relieve us from an exceedingly disagreeable and embarrassing duty. I feel quite satisfied that all the country south of the Yellowstone River, from the Black Hills of the Cheyenne as far west as the Big Horn Valley, and perhaps as far west as Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone, is gold bearing, but as to the amount of the gold deposit I cannot say; it may be great, or it may be small.

"This area is also, at many places, well timbered, has many beautiful valleys of rather high altitude, with good soil and abundance of running water. I make this statement from having studied this country for a long time and in order that my superiors who will, before long, have to deal with the question of the Black Hills, may be able to better appreciate the interests of all concerned, be they white or red.

"The Sioux Indians, numbering about twenty-five thousand, now hold this extensive, and, perhaps, very valuable country, and in addition, the belt eastward from the base of the Black Hills of the Cheyenne to the Missouri River, which would make about ten thousand acres of land for the head of each family, and perhaps much more.

"To meet the troubles which will originate from the Black Hills question, to be in advance of them when they come, and be better able to deal with them, I directed, without expense to the Government, an exploration of the Yellowstone River last spring, and selected two