

39

As a consequence of Allison's negotiations, numerous parties of the hostile Indians arrived at Poplar River during the month of November and the early part of December, until, finally, a considerable body of them had collected. When they first arrived they professed the most peaceful sentiments, and announced their intention to proceed on to Fort Buford and surrender to the commanding officer of that post, but as their number were increased by successive arrivals they became turbulent and arrogant; they no longer held out promises to surrender; they ^{P. 100} even assumed a threatening attitude towards the garrison. Under these circumstances it became necessary to re-enforce the troops at the post. Therefore Captain Bell, Seventh Cavalry, with his own company and thirty men from the companies of the Seventh Infantry at Fort Buford, was sent from that post to Poplar River, and Major Ilges, with five companies of the Fifth Infantry, was sent to the same place from Fort Keogh.

Captain Bell arrived on the 15th, Major Ilges on the 24th of December. Major Ilges immediately assumed command.

The history of the events which followed can be best narrated in his own words. I therefore quote the following reports from him at length:

HEADQUARTERS CAMP POPLAR CREEK, MONT.

January 31, 1881.

Sir: I have the honor to submit the following report of the movements of the battalion Fifth Infantry from Fort Keogh, and the operations of the troops of this camp since I assumed command of the same.

I left Fort Keogh, Mont., December 15, 1880, in obedience to special instructions, dated Headquarters Fort Keogh, Mont., December 13, 1880. The command was supplied with 300 rounds of ammunition per man, and 10 days' rations and forage.

The battalion consisted of Companies A, B, C, F, and G, Fifth Infantry, accompanied by Acting Assistant Surgeon, W. E. Sabin as medical officer, and under command of Maj. Guido Ilges, Fifth Infantry (171 enlisted men,