

one-half less than had been reported by the agent. The count at Spotted Tail's Agency developed less than five thousand, whereas nearly double that number were presumed to be present at their agency and were ostensibly issued to. Troops were also sent to the Missouri River agencies to accomplish these same purposes, and the number of Indians actually present was found to be from one-third to one-half less than reported present for issues. It was then easy to see where the small bands originally out, and upon whom the war was being waged, obtained their strength and supplies.

At last, on July 22, Congress having passed a bill authorizing the construction of the two posts in the Yellowstone country, recommended long before this war began, preparations were made to begin them at once and all the material was prepared as rapidly as possible, but the season had now become so far advanced that it was found impracticable to get the supplies up the Yellowstone river, on account of low water, so the building of the posts had to be deferred until the following spring. However, a temporary cantonment was ordered to be immediately constructed at the mouth of Tongue River, the place selected for one of the permanent posts (now Fort Keogh), and a strong garrison, under the command of Colonel Miles, Fifth Infantry, was detailed to occupy it.

July 7, Lieut. F. W. Sibley, Second Cavalry, commanding a detachment of twenty-five men, with several citizens, was sent by General Crook to make a reconnaissance, and when near where the Little Big Horn River emerges from the Big Horn Mountains, encountered a very large force of Indians who nearly succeeded in capturing the entire detachment. By great coolness, abandoning all their horses, after a very gallant fight, Lieutenant Sibley's party succeeded in escaping from the Indians and on foot made their way over a most broken country