

government, as will, it is thought, furnish a true account of our Indian difficulties of late, and tend to enlist such serious attention by the department and Congress upon the subject of the management of our Indian affairs as will result in the adoption of measures that are justly due to a people struggling feebly and vainly against the irresistible course of events.

The late civil war afforded an extraordinary occasion for the development of the inherent war spirit among a large number of Indians; frequent murders, raids, and the destruction of much valuable property resulted therefrom. About the close of the war endeavors were made to turn the most disaffected to the interests of peace. Commissioners were sent in 1865 to the hostile Sioux bands in the north, between the Platte and Missouri rivers, and to the unfriendly Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Apaches and Comanches, south of the Platte, who entered into treaties with these tribes for the settlement of all difficulties, and obligating peaceful conduct. Scarcely had the compacts been proclaimed when depredations and hostilities were again renewed. Among various bands in Dakota serious disaffection was exhibited in the fall of 1866 in the commission of repeated outrages. Emboldened by their successes a large number banded together for the purpose of breaking up certain military posts, and driving the soldiers and citizens out of the country. A considerable force (about 96 men) sent out against this party in December last from Fort Phil, Kearney, one of the new posts established for the protection of the route of travel by emigrants and others to Montana, through what is called the Powder river country, were unfortunately drawn into ambush and barbarously massacred. The determination to wage a desperate war was apparent, and likely to extend far and wide. On the 18th of February last the President appointed a commission of military officers and civilians to visit the scene of hostilities and investigate the difficulties. They were instructed to ascertain who were the actors in the massacre at Fort Phil, Kearney; what portion of the Indians in that section were hostile; what friendly, and to separate these classes by placing the latter upon reservations. The commissioners (Generals A. Sully, J. B. Sanborn,