

During the year, two most important enterprises, in which the whole civilized world has an interest, have been in progress within this Indian country--the Omaha Pacific railroad and the Kansas Pacific railroad. The former was completed last year, and in running order as far as the forks of the Platte, 280 miles west of Omaha. The winter season was a month later this year than usual, and an immense amount of rain fell in April and May, delaying work; but since June rapid progress has been made. I have myself passed over 455 miles of finished railroad west of Omaha, and am satisfied from the preparations made and materials on the ground that the Omaha Pacific railroad will be finished and in good running order during the month of November as far as the Cheyenne, the foot of the Rocky mountains, a distance of 530 miles from Omaha. Although the Indian hostilities have been somewhat embarrassed the surveying and grading parties, yet they have not materially delayed the main work of construction

The Kansas Pacific railroad sustained heavy damage by the freshets of May and June.

This was rapidly and substantially repaired by the contractor, Mr. Shoemaker, and the road was in complete order up to Fort Harker by the first of July. Since that date their working parties have been often interrupted by Indians. Still this railroad also has made fair progress, and I am convinced it will be finished in good working order up to and beyond Fort Hays, 76 miles west of Fort Harker, during the present month of October.

My instructions have been to extend to both these roads as much military protection and assistance as the troops could spare consistent with their other heavy and important duties; and I shall continue the same general orders to aid these important enterprises.

These roads, although in the hands of private corporations, have more than the usual claim on us for military protection, because the general government is largely interested pecuniarily. They aid us materially in our military operations by transporting troops and stores rapidly across a belt of land hitherto only passed in the summer by slow trains drawn by oxen, dependent on the grass for food; and all the States and Territories west have a direct dependence on these roads for their material supplies. When these two great thoroughfares reach the base of the Rocky mountains, and when the Indian title to roam at will over the country lying between them is extinguished, then the solution of this most complicated question of Indian hostilities will be comparatively easy, for this