

power has no rightful authority to interpose in such cases, and the consequences already are very demoralizing, and will soon be worse unless a rightful remedy is applied. I have no suggestions to make, but most urgently would invite the War Department to lay the subject before the Congress of the United States, in order that it may take the whole subject under consideration, and provide an efficient civil government, or empower the military to exercise such authority where the civil authority is manifestly inadequate.

On the first day of July last I made you an official report on the Indian affairs of the plains, which I beg now to refer to and make part of this. Since that date the Congress of the United States has, by an act approved July 20, 1867, provided for a board of commissioners, to proceed to the Indian country, and to take in charge the whole question. I was detailed by the President as a member of that board, which assembled at the Southern Hotel, of this city, on the sixth day of August, and has ever since been closely engaged in the work. Pending their action, I have made all military movements purely defensive, and subordinate to their plans and purposes. In the departments bordering on the Platte and Missouri, Indian hostilities have in a measure ceased since the board has been at work, but on the Arkansas and Smoky Hill, hostilities still prevail; yet it is hoped these also will, in a measure, be quieted down. Until that commission has closed its work, and Congress has acted on their report, the military will be kept as much on the defensive as possible; but it is not equally practicable to restrain the people who live in contact with the Indians, and who have less faith in their sincerity as to peace. In the mean time, I deem it wise and prudent to continue to occupy as heretofore the great roads and the exposed points of our frontiers, and to use the time in improving the buildings and collecting the necessary supplies. In this we have made good progress, and from personal inspection, and from the reports of good and tried inspectors, I am well satisfied that our troops are in infinitely better condition in all respects than they were at this time last year. If the Indian peace commission succeed in quieting the Indians, these military posts will soon become what they were heretofore on our western border, the nuclei of towns, enabling us to withdraw the troops, and to concentrate them either at cheaper posts of supply, or to move them still further in the direction of the newer and more exposed settlements.

The experiment of using Indians in the capacity of soldiers has been partially tried during the past year, with as much success as could reasonably be expected. The act of Congress approved July 28, 1866, provided for one thousand Indian