

act 2
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taken

the statement of several of the survivors that they had been frightened from their homes by the news of Merriam's approach. Sumner, in his report, calls attention to the fact that they committed no depredations in their flight, although they passed several ranches and at one time even went through a pasture filled with horses and cattle without attempting to appropriate them. He also expresses the opinion that Big Foot was compelled unwillingly to go with his people. The whole number of fugitives was at least 340, including a few from the bands of Sitting Bull and Hump. Immediately on learning of their flight Colonel Sumner notified General Carr, commanding in the direction of the Bad Lands. (War, 12.)

The situation at this crisis is thus summed up by Indian Commissioner Morgan:

Groups of Indians from the different reservations had commenced concentrating in the Bad Lands upon or in the vicinity of the Pine Ridge reservation. Killing of cattle and destruction of other property by these Indians, almost entirely within the limits of Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations, occurred, but no signal fires were built, no warlike demonstrations were made, no violence was done to any white settler, nor was there cohesion or organization among the Indians themselves. Many of them were friendly Indians, who had never participated in the ghost dance, but had fled thither from fear of soldiers, in consequence of the Sitting Bull affair or through the overpersuasion of friends. The military gradually began to close in around them and they offered no resistance, and a speedy and quiet capitulation of all was confidently expected. (Comr., 34.)

act 2-3

Nearly 3,000 troops were now in the field in the Sioux country. This force was fully sufficient to have engaged the Indians with success, but as such action must inevitably have resulted in wholesale killing on both sides, with the prospect of precipitating a raiding warfare unless the hostiles were completely annihilated, it was thought best to bring about a surrender by peaceful means.

The refugees in the Bad Lands who had fled from Pine Ridge and Rosebud had been surrounded on the west and north by a strong cordon of troops, operating under General Brooke, which had the effect of gradually forcing them back toward the agency. At the same time that officer made every effort to expedite the process by creating disensions in the Indian camp, and trying in various ways to induce them to come in by small parties at a time. To this end the Indians were promised that if they complied with the orders of the military their rights and interests would be protected, so far as it was within the power of the military department to accomplish that result. Although they had about lost confidence in the government, these assurances had a good effect, which was emphasized by the news of the death of Sitting Bull, the arrest of Big Foot, and return of Hump to his agency, and the steady pressure of the troops from behind; and on December 27, 1890, the entire force broke camp and left their stronghold in the Bad Lands and began moving in toward the agency at Pine Ridge. The several detachments of troops followed behind,

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