

other officers were serving with the companies and furnished to their men examples of fear-  
less exposure and great endurance,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. S. OTIS,

*Lieutenant-Colonel Twenty-second Infantry, Commanding.*

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,

*Headquarters Department of Dakota, Saint Paul, Minn.*

CAMP OPPOSITE CARIN CREEK,  
*On the Yellowstone River, October 25, 1876.*

Sir: I have the honor to report that having received information of the movement of hostile Indians from the south toward the Yellowstone; also of the design of Sitting Bull to go north to the Big Dry for buffalo, I moved with the Fifth Infantry to intercept or follow his movements. On Custer Creek, I learned that he had attacked and turned back one train from Glendive and made a second unsuccessful attack upon an escort and train under the command of Colonel Otis.

Moving northeast and approaching their trail and camp, they appeared in considerable numbers and presented a flag of truce and desired to communicate. I met Sitting Bull between the lines. He expressed a desire to "make a peace." He desired to hunt buffalo, to trade (particularly for ammunition), and agreed that the Indians would not fire upon soldiers if they were not disturbed. He desired to know why the soldiers did not go into winter quarters; and, in other words, he desired an "old-fashioned peace" for the winter. He was informed of the terms of the government, and on what grounds he could obtain peace, and that he must bring his tribe in near our camp. The interview ended near sundown with no definite result, they retiring to their camp, and my command moving and camping on Cedar Creek, in position to move easily to intercept their movement north. Sitting Bull was told to come in next day. As the command was moving north between their camp and the Big Dry, they again appeared and desired to talk. A council followed between the lines, with Sitting Bull, Pretty Bear (chief in council), Bull Eagle, John Sans Arca, Standing Bear, Gall (war chief), White Bull, and others of their headmen present. Sitting Bull was anxious for peace, provided he could have his own terms; yet to surrender to the government would be a loss of prestige to him as a great war chief. His taste and great strength is as a warrior, and I should judge that influence would have great weight with him as against wiser counsels. Several of his headmen and people, I believe, desire peace. The demands of the government were fully explained to him, and the only terms required of him were that he should camp his tribe on some point on the Yellowstone near the troops, or go into some government agency and place his people under subjection to the government. He said he would come in to trade for ammunition, but wanted no rations or annuities, and desired to live as an Indian; gave no assurance of good faith, and as the council ended was told that a non-acceptance of the liberal terms of the government would be considered an act of hostility. An engagement immediately followed. They took position on a line of hills and broke ground, occupying every mound and ravine. They were driven from every part of the field, through their camp-ground and down Bad Route Creek, and finally across the Yellowstone at the ford they had crossed about a week ago. In their camp and on their line of retreat, they abandoned tons of dried meat, lodges-poles, travois, camp equipage, ponies, and broken-down cavalry horses, &c. They fought principally dismounted, and were driven 43 miles to the south side of the Yellowstone. During the fight, as we passed rapidly over the field, five dead warriors were reported to me as left on the field, besides those they were seen to carry away. I intend to continue the pursuit. They are in great want of food, their stock is nearly worn down, and they cannot have a large amount of ammunition. What they have has been taken from citizens in the Black Hills, from troops in the Custer massacre, or from friendly Indians. Several of the Indians who had just come out from the Standing Rock agency were seen to have a fresh supply of .50-caliber ammunition. Long Dog, one of Sitting Bull's chiefs, and one of the worst men in the tribe, is now at Peck getting ammunition.

I have the honor to recommend that all communication between the hostile and agency Indians, except through military channels, be discontinued, when, I believe, this trouble can be settled during the winter. I believe that Fort Peck should be occupied, and all ammunition in that vicinity seized by the government. Since the engagement I believe they will be more inclined to make peace. Their force was estimated at upward of four hundred lodges and nearly one thousand warriors.

If they do not accept the terms of the government within one month, I am satisfied they will go to the Big Horn country for grass and game. If any supplies have been placed in that vicinity, I would be glad to be apprised of it, as the command may move in that direction.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

NELSON A. MILES,

*Colonel Fifth Infantry, Brevet Major-General Commanding.*

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,

*Department of Dakota, Saint Paul, Minn.*