

Indians who roamed and hunted, their annuity. To punish them for doing so was a grave violation of the provisions of the treaty.

While the Sioux were punished for exercising this right, the whites in small, as well as large bodies, passed through and prospected in the forbidden territory. The military did not check these incursions. They were not only permitted by it, but protected. Among the expeditions were parties engaged "in the interests of science." These went out from time to time to explore the Black Hills, and other portions of the reservation, and were actually accompanied by military escorts and protection. The Indians protested, but without avail. The most formidable of these expeditions was fitted out in the year 1874, and left St. Paul about the last of June. It was destined to a thorough exploration of the Black Hills, and was in charge of General Custer. Nothing was said in Congress about it; no appropriation made for it, and it was in wanton and flagrant violation of the provisions of the ²⁹⁷ treaty. General Custer even made application for, and obtained from the Santee agency, about thirty young men of the Santee band of Sioux, to act as scouts. These Indians were surprised when the call was made upon them. They hesitated and expressed regret, but yet obeyed the summons. This expedition incensed the Sioux exceedingly. On its return it was pronounced a successful reconnoissance, and the people were told that there was gold in the Black Hills, and the country much better than hitherto supposed; that timber was plenty, and that water and grass were abundant. The covetous eyes of the white man were thus turned to these hills, and parties began to organize to go into them. The first intruders, who started with the avowed purpose of locating and mining, were driven back, but the idea of occupying the forbidden land was not abandoned. Expeditions were also fitted out to explore and occupy the unceded Indian country. It was also determined to change the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which at the date of the treaty was located, and while it crossed the Missouri below the mouth of the Yellowstone, did not ascend that stream a great distance until it was crossed, and thence westward the line was on the north side of the Yellowstone.