to our troops, at least to the settlers in Northern Montana and in the Valley

of the Yellowstone, and to their flocks and herds. Moreover, their attitude

and position offered a great temptation to the dissatisfied and turbulent among

the agency Indians of their nation to break loose from the control to which

they are obliged to submit at their agencies, and to return to a wandering and

predatory life. It was therefore extremely desirable that they should be

brought into subjection in some manner. Though parties of them were frequently

on our side of the line, it was nearly useless to send troops in pursuit of

them, for their safe refuge on foreign territory was always so close at hand

that their escape to it was all but certain.

Under these circumstances, in September, 1880, Maj. D. H. Brotherton, of

the Seventh Infantry, commanding at Fort Buford, reported that the interpreter

employed at his post, Mr. E. H. Allison, possessed great influence with the

hostile Sioux, and could go among them with safety, and he suggested that

Allison should put himself in communication with Sitting Bull and other chiefs,

and endeavor to induce them to return to this country and surrender upon the

terms upon which other bands of the hostile Sioux had surrendered.

Authority to send out Allison for this purpose was given, and he made

several visits to those of the hostile Indians who were accessible to him.

Protracted negotiations followed, and frequent promises to return and surrender

were made by the Indians, but many excuses for delay were made, and the

specific promises made were broken as often as they were made.

In the meantime, upon the application of the Indian agent at Poplar

River agency for military protection, two companies of the Eleventh Infantry,

under command of Capt. O. B. Read, of that regiment, were sent to that place

with orders to establish a contonment. These companies reached their

destination on the 12th of October. They immediately commenced the construction

of huts for shelter during the winter that was to follow.