

purpose of disarming and dismounting the bands from which trouble was expected. Before Colonel Merritt could reach there, however, affairs had assumed such a threatening aspect that it was determined to arrest and disarm the Indians with such force as was at hand. Accordingly Colonel Mackenzie, Fourth Cavalry, with eight troops of cavalry, on October 22, succeeded, at night, in surrounding and surprising Red Cloud's and Red Leaf's bands, so that when daylight dawned on the 23d, the Indians surrendered without firing a shot. The Indians, numbering about four hundred warriors, were at once disarmed and, followed by their families, with camp equipage and property, were brought into the agency, where they were released and put into camp. About seven hundred ponies were captured, together with all the arms and ammunition the Indians had about their persons and in the lodges.

General Crook then had a council with Spotted Tail, and, satisfied that the latter intended to be loyal to the government, placed this Indian in charge of all the Indians at both Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies, deposing Red Cloud, and the conduct of whose followers had given evidence of anything but proper intentions. These Indians were the same who had killed a large part of the garrison of Fort Phil, Kearney, in 1866, and who had, in 1874, threatened to massacre the people at Red Cloud Agency, because they attempted to hoist the United States flag over it.

The troops composing what had been known as the "Big Horn expedition," under General Crook, having been distributed to their stations for the winter, another column, known as the "Powder River expedition," was organized, and left Fort Fetterman November 15, 1876. It consisted of Troop K, Second Cavalry, H and K, Third Cavalry, B, D, E, F, and M, Fourth Cavalry, and H and L, Fifth Cavalry, the cavalry being all commanded by Col. R. S. Mackenzie, Fourth Cavalry. The infantry and