

The same causes which led to a general feeling of apprehension on account of Indian hostilities at the north, had also manifested themselves in General Hancock's department, more especially along the Arkansas river route to New Mexico, and the Smoky Hill road to Colorado. Very early in the season Indians of the Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Arapahoe bands had unreservedly notified the commanding officers of posts and the stage drivers and agents that, as soon as the grass grew, they would insist on our withdrawing from these roads. General Hancock also learned that certain Ogalalla and Brule Sioux had come down from the far north, and were then in treaty with the Cheyennes and Dog-Soldiers, arranging for general hostilities and a concert of action on their part. He accordingly collected a force, mostly of the new seventh cavalry and thirty-seventh infantry, with light battery B, fourth artillery, and during the month of April he proceeded in person to the threatened country, viz, that embracing Forts Zarah, Larned, and Dodge on the Arkansas, and Forts Harker and Hays on the Smoky Hill. He held full interviews with nearly all the leading men of the tribes I have named, but for reasons fully set forth in his report of May 23, 1867, he, on the 19th of April, burned the village of the Cheyennes and Sioux on Pawnee Fork as a punishment for depredations and murders previously committed. I refer to the general's report of this whole matter, and beg that no indemnification be attempted to these tribes on this account, for it would encourage them to believe themselves warranted to commit any number of murders and thefts, and they would necessarily infer that we feared to strike them in their most vulnerable points, viz., their property and families. It is very difficult to catch their warriors if once on their guard, and the only mode of restraining them is by making them feel that we can reach their property and families. Inasmuch as General Hancock has been relieved of his command, and may not be able to give me his annual report in time to go with this, I enclose herewith in place thereof the following papers compiled at his headquarters, viz.: 1. Distribution of troops December 31, 1866. 2. Distribution of troops July 31, 1867. 3. Distances travelled by detachments from December, 1866, to September, 1867. 4. Actual results of collisions of troops with Indians. 5. Damage done to citizen trains this year. I am convinced that on this line also our troops have done all that was possible, and that without them we would have been compelled to abandon the roads altogether, and leave the Territories of New Mexico and Colorado cut off entirely from any intercourse with the rest of our country, a state of things not to be contemplated for a moment by a government claiming dominion of the soil.