

belt of country will naturally fill up with our own people, who will permanently separate the hostile Indians of the north from those of the south, and allow us to direct our military forces on one or the other at pleasure, if thereafter they continue their acts of hostility.

During the past year we have been infinitely embarrassed by many causes that I trust will not occur again. In the early part of the year there seemed to be a concerted and mischievous design to precipitate hostilities by a series of false reports almost without parallel, such as that referred to at Fort Buford, and the subsequent report of the massacre of all the people on board the steamboat Miner, both of which were manufactured out of whole cloth. These were followed by exaggerations of similar nature on the other travelled roads, such as that of Moore's ranch, on the Platte, and of Bishop Lamy's party, on the Arkansas. These may have originated in a natural rivalry for business on the three great roads, the friends of each aiming to damage the business of the others by these inventions and exaggerations; but the truth is, that all the roads have been seriously damaged thereby, and worse yet, emigration to the mountain Territories has been seriously checked by them. There is and can be no remedy for such things until the people in general learn to measure such reports by the experience of the past.

But there is a pressing necessity for legislation to give greater assurance of safety to life and property on the plains. The States of Kansas and Nebraska, and the Territories of Dakota, Montana, Colorado, and New Mexico, have each, within their prescribed boundaries, a rightful civil and criminal jurisdiction, but the troops have no law for their own guidance and protection. The Indian intercourse law of 1834 is utterly inapplicable to the case, for by that law we may at any moment be called on to eject by force the white population of these Territories, which embrace more or less of Indian lands. Public lands have been surveyed and sold, railroads and stage roads located, and telegraph lines, with their necessary offices and stations, established in a country where the ~~only~~ Indian title is clearly recognized; and all parties interested ~~in the country where the~~ turn to the military, the only visible national authority, to give force and effect to their titles or to their rights. Towns and settlements are daily "occurring" in western Dakota without any civil government, and the seat of the civil authority is at Yancton, on the Missouri river, too distant and inaccessible to be regarded. Murders and robberies are of frequent occurrence, with no practicable means of punishment or prevention. The military