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Thomas Henry Tibbles papers - George Crook: Letters and Clippings, 1879, 1882

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Hayt's Assault on Gen. Crook-- Con[?]ing Another Indian War.

From the Omaha Herald of September 11th.

In my recent trip East I found a great prejudice existing in the minds of many people against the officers of the army. The Indian bureau has managed to throw on them the odium of all the horrible cruelties for which the officials of the Indian office alone are responsible. After a good deal of investigation I have come to the conclusion that this sentiment has been created by a studied effort on the part of these officials. Many slanderous paragraphs going the rounds of the press of the eastern States I trace directly to Mr. Hayt, and some of them to Mr. A. C. Barstow. Everybody in this part of the country knows that the massacre of the Cheyennes last winter was caused by the cruel order of the Indian bureau to force them back to the malaria-infested districts of the Indian Territory, from whence they had fled to save the lives of their wives and children. Mr. Barstow refers to this in his report as follows:

"I call attention to an exhibition lately given of the treatment of the Indians by the military. They Cheyennes were given to the care of the army. When it was announced that they refused to go back to the Indian territory, the military tried to starve them into giving up. They resolved to go back to their own friends rather than starve. They leaped out of the windows and escaped; the military pursued them and forty were killed. These people were defenseless and were shot in cold blood."

Mr. Barstow is chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners, and the law requires that the members of that Board shall be eminent for their philanthropy and moral standing. This man, so appointed, puts forth this statement for the evident purpose of shielding his friend Hayt, who alone was responsible for this cold blooded butchery. Hayt ordered these Indians taken bak to the Indian territory, just as he ordered Standing Bear taken back, and under the present system the army has to obey his infamous orders. The more I investigate this subject, the more I am convinced that this man Hayt has taken more lives of innocent men, women and children by his inhuman and cruel orders than any man now living, not excluding the King of Dahomey himself. The army is forced to execute his orders. A soldier cannot ask the reason why, even though he is a general officer. His duty is simply to obey. When Mr. Hayt ordered the Cheyennes taken back to the Indian Territory he blackened his soul with all the blood which was shed in the effort to enforce that order. The effort of Mr. Barstow to lay the responsibility upon Gen. Crook is a malicious and cowardly thing.

I endeavored in all my speeches and interviews to explain to the people of the East the true situation of the army in regard to the Indians, by showing them that the Indians were in no measure under their control, and that they were never called upon for advice, and that when an officer who had long served upon the frontier and was thoroughly acquainted with Indian habits and character, sometimes volunteered his advice it was always treated with contempt. The use made of them was, when traders and thieving agents forced the Indians into war, the Indian Bureau would call upon the Secretary of War for troops

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