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Article Summary: Hostilities between Indians and white men on the Plains erupted at the time of the Civil War, prompting increased military action and even calls for genocide to extinguish the threat to westward expansion. A peace policy based on an enforced reservation plan for the western Indians eventually won the support of Plainsmen, Eastern humanitarians, and Indian rights groups.

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Photographs / Images: Fort Laramie Council of 1868, US Senator Algernon S Paddock

THE PLAINS FRONTIER
AND THE INDIAN PEACE POLICY,
1865 - 1880

By ROBERT W. MARDOCK

NOT long after the outbreak of the Civil War, the unstable peace that characterized Indian-white relations in many parts of the West disintegrated. The Minnesota Sioux uprising of 1862 was followed by the eruption of hostilities throughout the Great Plains in 1863, prompting urgent pleas for military assistance. As the editor of the *Junction City* (Kansas) *Weekly Union* put it: send us five hundred troops at once to "subdue and chastise these Indians in a manner which will prevent a repetition of their outrages, and give peace and security to our border."¹

By the summer of 1864, increased military action seemed to be the only feasible solution. Accordingly, Major-General S. R. Curtis, Commander of the Department of Kansas, ordered the Colorado militia to punish the hostile Indians,

1. *Junction City* (Kansas) *Weekly Union*, June 4, 1864.

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adding: "I want no peace until the Indians suffer more." ² The following November, Colonel John Chivington's troops made a bloody attack on Chief Black Kettle's village in southeastern Colorado Territory, an incident which soon acquired notoriety among Indian policy critics as the "Sand Creek Massacre." At the same time, General Kit Carson led troops against raiding Kiowa and Comanche Indians in the Texas panhandle and fought the First Battle of Adobe Walls.

The Plains tribes reacted to these assaults with such vengeance during the winter of 1864-1865 that travel and telegraph communication over the Platte road were completely disrupted. The cutting of this vital East-West link, the threat to future Union Pacific railroad construction now getting underway in Nebraska Territory, and what appeared to be a complete loss of control of the Plains Indian tribes roused Congress to action. In March, 1865 a joint resolution directed an inquiry into the "condition of the Indian tribes and their treatment by civil and military authorities."³

After several months of investigation, a Congressional committee reported that the Indians were rapidly decreasing in numbers because of disease, intemperance, wars, white immigration and the "irrepressible conflict between a superior and inferior race when brought in contact." Furthermore, it was charged that most Indian wars could be traced to the aggressions of lawless whites, "always to be found on the frontier."⁴

This was not the first time that frontier whites had been blamed for Indian troubles. But now, unlike previous decades of the westward movement, these frontier adventurers had replaced the Indians as the arch-villains. The line of settlement, in moving well beyond the Missouri River and into the Great Plains, had come into conflict with an Eastern image of the Plains region as "permanent, Indian country,"

2. "Sand Creek Massacre," 39 Cong., 2 sess., *Senate Executive Documents*, pp. 171, 173.

3. *Congressional Globe*, 39 Cong., 1 sess., Pt. 1, p. 158.

4. U.S. Congress, Joint Special Committee, *Condition of the Indian Tribes*, 39 Cong., 2 sess., (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1867), pp. 3-10.

a land whose penetration by whites was a wrongful invasion.

This viewpoint, plus the aroused humanitarian conscience of the antislavery crusade and a popular desire for a return to peace and order, served to recast the role of the westering pioneers. They were no longer seen as heroes, impelled by manifest destiny and conquering the wilderness for civilization, but as "unprincipled, reckless, devoid of shame, looking upon an Indian as a fair object of plunder."⁵ So stated Indian Commissioner Dennis N. Cooley in 1866, and his views were generally seconded by Indian rights humanitarians, whose rapidly increasing activities during the post-Civil War years made Indian policy reform a major crusade.

When the Congressional peace commissioners and the humanitarian reformers insisted upon throwing much of the blame for the Indian troubles on the frontier populace, an acrimonious war of words broke out. Spokesmen for the Plains region usually saw this verbal conflict as sectional—East versus West, with the Mississippi River an approximate dividing line. Such a generalization was time-honored and convenient, even though there were many exceptions to the majority opinion in both sections.

The formation of sectional and Congressional Indian policy battle lines during the years 1865 through 1868 set the pattern for the ensuing decade of disagreement and conflict. The resulting lack of national unity, complicated by the Interior and War departments' disagreement over which could best manage Indian affairs, often seriously weakened the effectiveness of reform.

The East-West dissension on Indian policy was further agitated by sharply opposing views on the very nature of the red race. It was widely believed in the nineteenth century that it was race which determined the character of people.⁶

5. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 39 Cong., 2 sess., *House Executive Document No. 1* (Serial 1284), p. 20.

6. Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of An Idea in America* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), p. 244.

Therefore, almost any discussion of Indian policy, whether by Congress, the humanitarians, the military or the border settlers, usually included an analysis of racial characteristics.

Especially uninhibited on this subject were the opinions of Plains newspaper editors. For example, the editor of the *Kearney Herald* in July, 1866 declared that:

Nothing is more absurd to the man who has studied the habits of the Indian savage than to talk of making permanent treaty negotiations with these heartless creatures. They are destitute of all the promptings of human nature, having no respect for word or honor. Their only creed is that which gives them an unrestricted license to use and abuse beings, brutes and things, as though earth and its contents were inanimate wooden heaps, made purposely to gratify a heathenish pleasure. To the Indian, destruction is gain; it is a generative instinct and one which goes from infancy to the grave. Educated to look upon the white man with inveterate enmity, he ignores peace and civil associations. Now and then you will hear a chickenhearted historian, who knows nothing of the red savage, extolling his noble characteristics and praising his natural knightly endowments. The earnest defenders of this barbarian monster would turn away in disgust could they see him in all of his original desperation.

The best and only way to reconcile the blood-washed animal will be to impose upon him a worse schooling than has ever befallen the inferior races. . . .⁷

The "worse schooling" that most Plains people had in mind was a form of genocide, a plan diametrically opposed to the peace policy objectives of preservation and civilization of the red race. The *Kansas Daily Tribune* concluded in July, 1866 that:

there can be no permanent, lasting peace on our frontiers till these devils are exterminated. Our eastern friends may be slightly shocked at such a sentiment, but a few year's residence in the West, and acquaintance with the continued history of their outrages upon the settlers and travelers of the west, has dispersed the romance with which these people are regarded in the East.⁸

The first mayor of Cheyenne, Wyoming, received "resounding applause" when he gave the toast: "'Here is to the city of Cheyenne: May she ever prosper, and the tribe of Indians after whom she is named be completely exterminated.'"⁹

7. *Kearney Herald*, quoted in the Marysville, Kansas *Enterprise*, July 14, 1866.

8. *Kansas Daily Tribune* (Lawrence), July 10, 1866.

9. *Cheyenne* (Wyoming) *Leader*, October, 1867, quoted in T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 30.



The Fort Laramie Council of 1868.



U.S. Senator Algernon S. Paddock.

Closely related to the idea of extermination was the frontier expression "the only good Indian is a dead Indian." It was not always meant literally, but it was no wonder that Plains people were categorized in the East as inhumane when Congressional delegates, like Montana's James Cavanaugh, declared before the House that "I have never in my life seen a good Indian (and I have seen thousands) except when I have seen a dead Indian." He then reproved the peace policy advocates for their ignorance of Indian character, pointing out that they had never been chased, as he had been, by these "red devils—who seem to be the pets of eastern philanthropists."¹⁰

Wendell Phillips' frequent declarations on equal rights for all races were especially offensive to frontier people. In answer to Phillips' theories of equality, Montana Territorial Governor James M. Ashley wrote to the editor of the *National (Anti-Slavery) Standard* that:

The Indian race on this continent has never been anything but an unmitigated curse to civilization, while the intercourse between the Indian and the white man has been only evil, and that continually, to both races, and must so remain until the last savage is translated to that celestial hunting ground for which they all believe themselves so well fitted, and to which every settler on our frontier wishes them individually and collectively a safe and speedy transit....In Montana we want no more Chinamen or Indians or barbarians of any race;—we already have enough and to spare.¹¹

By the spring of 1867, news of the Fetterman Massacre on the Bozeman Trail in Wyoming, coupled with numerous reports of bloody Indian depredations along the frontier from Montana to Texas, had spread panic among the border settlements. To satisfy the settlers' demands for military protection and to discourage their organization into regiments of volunteer Indian fighters, General William T. Sherman ordered the punitive Hancock Expedition to move against the Cheyenne of the Central Plains. But along the Pacific Railroad and the Bozeman Road, the under-manned western army was forced on the defensive in the face of an

10. *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 2 sess., Pt. 3, p. 2638.

11. *National Standard* (New York) October 1, 1870.

overwhelming number of determined Sioux warriors.

Meanwhile, a growing bloc of Congressmen, discouraged by military reverses and disturbed by the heavy cost of seemingly fruitless frontier campaigns, were becoming receptive to the "peace policy" approach to the Indian problem. Thus, upon receiving an investigating commission's report that the Plains Indians were ready for peace, the House of Representatives organized a commission to treat with the hostile tribes.

This news, upon reaching the Plains, stirred up a whirlwind of opposition to the Peace Commission's approach. A Montana resident wrote in September, 1867:

I see that the government is pursuing the old policy of treating for peace, and sending out larger quantities of supplies to the Indians. As winter is coming on, and the Indians for that reason will soon be compelled to stop their hellish work of murder and plunder, no doubt they will see fit to accept the treaties and presents, and trade for an abundant supply of the most approved arms and ammunition to recommence with in the spring.¹²

The *Daily Colorado Times* reported that "great numbers" of Denver citizens were pledging themselves "to unite in resisting the collection of all United States taxes until such time as the Government shall see fit to protect Colorado from Indian ravages, etc." ¹³

Kansas Governor Samuel Crawford criticized the government's "wicked policy" which encouraged the Indians "in the most bloody and atrocious crimes," and saw behind it "a gang of thieving Indian agents in the West, and a maudlin sentimentality in the East." Real peace, he believed, would come only when prompt and decisive measures were used to punish the Indians, rather than reward their evil deeds with presents from a peace commission.¹⁴

Although merciless in their attacks on Indian policy makers, most Plains newspaper editors, politicians and

12. *Kansas State Record* (Topeka), October 23, 1867.

13. *Daily Colorado Times* (Central City), June 21, 1867.

14. Samuel J. Crawford, *Kansas in the Sixties* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1911), pp. 263-264, 270-271.

average citizens were genuinely concerned about anything that might jeopardize the growth and prosperity of the region. Eastern accusations that it was in the interests of frontiersmen to foment Indian wars were therefore even more infuriating. The aforementioned Montanan wished that these accusers:

could be compelled to travel across the plains without escort, and have an opportunity of seeing the numerous graves, the burned buildings and devastated fields of the frontiersmen, and realize the terrible crimes which the red fiends have committed, and see the alarm and dread which prevails wherever an Indian outbreak is apprehended, then we should hear no more of their cruel falsehoods.¹⁵

During the debate on the formation of the 1867 Peace Commission, Senator John M. Thayer, a Republican from Nebraska, asserted that "the people of...Kansas and Nebraska, and the Territories beyond...dread an Indian war, because it is like an incubus upon them and their prosperity."¹⁶ Later that same year, Kansas Senator Edmund G. Ross explained that "what we all most ardently desire, is the immunity of our frontiers from the disturbances and devastations which have so effectually retarded the settlement and development of the West."¹⁷

The findings of the Congressional Peace Commission were published in January, 1868 with the announcement that the Commission had inaugurated the "hitherto untried policy of endeavoring to conquer by kindness."¹⁸ In the East the report was a major factor in arousing even more humanitarian activity on behalf of the Indians, but in the West criticism continued. In a series of indignant editorials, the *Daily Colorado Herald* condemned the efforts of the Commissioners as "so much actual nonsense and humbug" and predicted even more Indian attacks during the coming spring. "He [the Indian] is now better for it," noted the editor,

15. *Kansas State Record*, October 23, 1867.

16. *Congressional Globe*, 40 Cong., 1 sess., Pt. 1, p. 689.

17. *Kansas State Record*, November 6, 1867.

18. Report of the Indian Peace Commissioners, Jan. 7, 1868, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 40 Cong., 3 sess., *House Executive Document No. 1*, p. 492.

the benevolent commission have given him blankets for the winter and plenty of ammunition for his spring campaign. Why did they do this? Was it because "Red Cloud" or some other bare-legged scamp stood up and made them shake in their integuments by a torrent of native eloquence?—at any rate his stuttering broken English was reported as such by the eastern press—or was it because their love and beneficent foresight for the pioneer of the West, made them think it was for his advantage?... We think it is the duty of every newspaper in the Territory, to unite in a protest against any more Peace Commissioners being sent out. They are a curse to our country, and it is the most expensive plan which can possibly be adopted....It cost the Government thirty millions to attend to the Indians last year, and it will cost as much more this year. For a less sum every hostile Indian could be maintained at the Sherman House in Chicago; and at the end of the year we would have the satisfaction of knowing that they were all dead—Chicago whiskey would settle the Indian question in less than a year.¹⁹

More plainsmen found the Peace Policy method less objectionable after its adoption by the Grant Administration in the spring of 1869. To them, the most desirable feature of the new "Quaker Policy" was an enforced reservation plan for all western Indian tribes. The possibility of eliminating Indian wars, with the discouraging publicity for prospective settlers—the frequent press accounts of grasshopper raids and tornadoes were bad enough—brought cautious approval. And the likelihood that restricted reservations would allow the settlement of more western lands was not overlooked. For these reasons, and for its "elements of honesty and humanity," the editor of the *Kansas State Record* believed that the Grant policy was entitled to a patient and thorough testing. That is, if enough "Sheridanism" were used "to keep the hostile portion of the Indians on their good behavior" while the trial was being made.²⁰

But despite the promising features, even such conditional praise was rare in the Plains press. As the *Leavenworth Bulletin* bluntly informed its readers:

If more men are to be scalped and their hearts boiled, we hope to God that it may be some of our Quaker Indian Agents, and not our frontiersmen who want and are trying to do something for the improvement of the country.²¹

19. *Daily Colorado Herald* (Central City), January 30, 1868; March 4, 1868.

20. *Kansas State Record*, November 3, 1869.

21. *Leavenworth (Kansas) Bulletin*, June 4, 1869, quoted in the *Western Observer* (Washington, Kan.), June 17, 1869.

And the *Junction City Weekly Union* observed that "even [William] Penn could not palliate the cruel deeds of hostile Indians of today. Many plans have been tried to produce peace on the border, but one alternative remains—EXTERMINATION."²²

Before 1880 most Congressmen from the Plains states and territories were in agreement with such editorial attacks on the Peace Policy. Among the minority was Kansas Republican Senator Samuel Pomeroy (1861-1873), who advocated a peace and civilization program under both Johnson and Grant. Influenced by his antislavery past, he saw the frontier conflict as a "war of races" and drew parallels between Negro and Indian problems and sympathized with both.²³ His Senate colleague, Edmund G. Ross (1866-1871), described Indians as degraded, debauched and treacherous, but he nevertheless opposed extermination as too inhuman and too costly and preferred the Congressional Peace Policy rationale that "it is cheaper to feed them than to fight them."²⁴

Kansas Republican Representative Sydney Clarke (1865-1871) opposed the peace policy position until 1870, when he became a proponent of Grant's Peace Policy and chairman of the House Committee on Indian Affairs. Clarke was one of the few Congressmen from the Plains who changed positions on Indian policy before the Custer tragedy of 1876. Political loyalty probably was a deciding factor in his case, although political affiliation was usually subordinate to voter sentiment where Indian policy was concerned.

Throughout this period, Nebraska's Republican Congressmen refused to support the Grant Administration's Quaker Policy. Montana's Democratic delegates, as might be expected, were among the most vehement critics, while the Territory's lone Republican timidly spoke on behalf of the education portion of the program. Texans of both parties

22. *Junction City Weekly Union*, June 19, 1869.

23. *Congressional Globe*, 38 Cong., 2 sess., Pt. 2, p. 709.

24. *Ibid.*, 40 Cong., 1 sess., Part 1, p. 705-706; *Kansas State Record* (Topeka), November 6, 1867.

condemned the Peace Policy, with the one exception of Representative John Hancock (1871-1877, 1883-1885), a Democrat who had faith in the work of the Quakers as well as the practical aspects of the civilization plan, i.e., the belief that the Indians would soon become self-sustaining and no longer a cost to the government. But like most frontier people, he advocated military control of the hostiles. Delegate William Steele (1873-1877), a Democrat from Wyoming Territory, liked the reservation system, believed that civilizing the red race would end frontier conflict, but took an anti-Peace Policy stand in the 1876 campaign.²⁵ Delegates from Dakota Territory, regardless of party, generally favored a peace policy and reservation system in order to encourage settlement and bring federal funds into the Territory.²⁶

The first nationwide attack on Grant's Indian policy occurred in the spring of 1873, when negotiations designed to end the Modoc War resulted in the treacherous murder of two Peace Commissioners by Modoc Indian leaders on April 11, 1873. The frontier population took full advantage of the tragedy to express intense opposition to Indians, humanitarians and the Peace Policy. In Denver the *Weekly Times* exclaimed that "when General Gillem shakes the gory scalps of the Modocs at us we will give him three or four good cheers."²⁷ The Georgetown *Daily Colorado Miner* blamed the government's romantic "experiments with the noble red man" for the tragedy and reminded readers that "western experience, in this and adjoining Territories, is decidedly against General Grant and the preachers."²⁸ Governor Horace Austin of Minnesota telegraphed the President "that the people in the Western States favor the decided policy in dealing with the Indians, the present missionary policy having no advocates on the frontier."²⁹

25. *Congressional Record*, 43 Cong., 1 sess., Vol. 2, Pt. 4, p. 3526.

26. Howard R. Lamar, *Dakota Territory, 1861-1889* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), pp. 105, 122.

27. *Weekly Times* (Denver), April 23, 1873.

28. *Daily Colorado Miner* (Georgetown), April 22, 1873.

29. *Boston Evening Transcript*, April 15, 1873.

The western attitude was unabashedly one of "I told you so," and this time the Plains critics had more company. President Grant, Washington officialdom and major newspapers in Chicago, New York City and Boston were in agreement on the need for swift and severe punishment of the guilty. But unlike the West, most Eastern journals upheld the Peace Policy and cautioned against its hasty abandonment.

The official pronouncement that the Peace Policy protected only the friendly Indians but punished those who were hostile was good news to Plains residents, who now speculated as to whether Eastern humanitarians had at last seen the light. They did not have long to wait. News soon came that Indian sympathizers were demanding executive clemency for the captured Modoc leaders.

Frontier reaction to these humanitarian efforts ranged from bitter sarcasm to open hostility. Upon hearing that a prayer for a policy of justice and mercy toward the Modoc Indians had been offered by Henry Ward Beecher in his New York City church, the *Denver Weekly Times* observed that prayers for these Indians were correct only "in the sense of the Ohio volunteer who in the War of 1812 prayed: 'Lord save the soul of that poor Indian,' and then plugged a bullet hole through the body." The editor went on to explain that "we have very little faith in prayer for the Modocs, unless backed by powder and shot."³⁰

A month later, annoyed by humanitarian attempts to release the Modocs, the editors of the *Weekly Times* sardonically noted that though they had always thought the Modocs to be "murderers, thieves and bloody devils...it certainly cannot be so, when we find a parcel of civilized men preparing to try every means at their disposal to save them. We begin to think that the Modocs are Christian gentlemen and ladies, and that the rest of us are cannibals [*sic*] thirsting for missionary meat."³¹

30. *Weekly Times*, May 14, 1873.

31. *Ibid.*, June 18, 1873.

The Modoc "massacre" revived the transfer issue, a periodic debate concerning the merits of returning the Indian Bureau to the War Department. The frontier strongly supported transfer, in opposition to the Peace Policy forces who considered military control tantamount to extermination of the red race. While this controversy was being hotly contended in and out of Congress, the Plains country was undergoing rapid change. Buffalo hunters, cattlemen, gold seekers, railroad builders and homesteaders were remaking the West. The reservations could not contain the angry tribesmen, who fought the buffalo hunters and the army on the Southern Plains (in the Red River War of 1874-1875); while on the Northern Plains, rebellious Sioux were gathering in defiance of the government. Military efforts in 1876 to force the latter onto their Dakota reservation were climaxed by the bloody "Custer Massacre." Again, as in 1873, it was the hapless Indian Peace Policy that bore much of the brunt of the nation's wrath.

This time the catastrophe was on a much larger scale and much closer to home than had been Oregon's Modoc affair. The reaction throughout the Plains was a mixture of fear, anger and vengeance. In frontier towns residents eagerly offered their services "to avenge Custer and exterminate the Sioux."³² Eastern editors were divided into pro- and anti-Peace Policy groups, depending largely on their political sentiments; but throughout the Western Plains and Rocky Mountains regions denunciations of the Quaker policy were the rule. A Boston paper noted that the massacre "has inflamed the communities nearest the Indians, and, indeed, the whole country... 'Remember Custer' is the watchword of the whole frontier from Iowa to Utah."³³ A newspaper correspondent telegraphed from Salt Lake City that "all the Union Pacific Railroad, from Cheyenne westward, and eastward, too, is alive with the excitement of Indian warfare."³⁴

In Congress, Senator Algernon Paddock of Nebraska

32. *The Times* (New York), July 12, 1876.

33. *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 8, 1876.

34. *Daily Advertiser* (Boston), July 22, 1876.

blamed the Peace Policy and introduced a bill authorizing the raising of five regiments of frontier Indian fighters.³⁵ In the House, William Phillips of Kansas proposed a similar bill.³⁶ The *Boulder (Colorado) News* blamed the tragedy on the "false philanthropic sentiment of the East" which had brought about the "reprehensible Indian policy of the government." Following this jibe at the humanitarians, the editor turned on the Indians—the "same cruel, revengeful savage, yesterday, to-day, and—till extermination. They are the same savage[s] they were when Lord Chatham, in Parliament, painted them as 'these horrible hell-hounds of savage war—hell-hounds, I say, of savage war.'"³⁷

In the Presidential campaign of 1876, both major parties carefully avoided committing themselves on the Indian question in their national platforms. Still, the Custer disaster was used by the Democrats as a new argument against the Republican Party.³⁸ Indian policy was a political issue in some areas of the West, where the transfer solution was again proposed as the panacea. However, with the exceptions of Texas and Montana, the Republican Party was victorious throughout the Plains. This cannot be interpreted as a clear indication of Indian policy sentiment, for some successful Republican Congressional candidates, such as Senator John J. Ingalls of Kansas, called for a reform of the Grant Peace Policy; others upheld it, while a Democrat, William Steele, campaigning against the Peace Policy in Wyoming was defeated.³⁹

The transfer issue died a lingering death in Congress after 1876, while Grant's Peace Policy underwent a gradual transformation during the Hayes Administration. However, the emphasis on education and civilization was retained, principles now enjoying wider acceptance as a realistic goal by Plains Congressmen. But revision brought a new emphasis on breaking up tribal relations and making the Indians self-sustaining.

35. *Ibid.*, July 8, 1876.

36. *Kansas State Record*, July 17, 1876.

37. *Boulder (Colorado) News*, July 7, 1876.

38. *The Times*, July 30, 1876.

39. *Ibid.*, July 30, 1876; October 29, 1876.

Aside from attacks on the Quakers as symbols of the Eastern humanitarian peace method, open criticism of actual church participation, per se, in the Grant Indian program was seldom heard in Congress or the press until the late 1870's. In one instance which occurred in April, 1880, Senator Samuel Maxey, a Democrat from Texas, charged that an indirect attempt had been made "to connect the church and state together" and place the Indian Bureau under the control of certain churches.⁴⁰ A more common criticism of religious participation was based on the fact that agency jobs were thereby removed from political patronage—an objection formally raised by Nebraska's senators in 1879.⁴¹ These viewpoints supported Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz in the gradual elimination of church selection of Indian agents, a cornerstone of Grant's Peace Policy.

Otherwise, by the late 1870's, most Plains Congressmen were becoming more sympathetic to such basic principles of the Peace Policy as education, civilization and humane treatment. Many freshmen had entered the Congressional ranks in the late 1870's, and most of them saw the red man in a different context than did their predecessors.⁴² Also, the restoration of the agency patronage system helped to mellow the politicians. Finally, it was recognized that although the Indian was no longer the menace he had been in the past, he still had to be reckoned with, and new measures were needed to make him a self-supporting member of society.

As an augur of the new era, among the new champions of Indian rights were Colorado's Helen Hunt Jackson and Nebraska's Thomas H. Tibbles. In keeping with a new editorial viewpoint on the Plains, the *Medicine Lodge Cresset*, May 8, 1879, criticized past treatment of the Indians as "a blot upon our history" and predicted that with equal rights,

40. See *The Congressional Record*, 46 Cong., 2 sess., Vol. 10, Pt. 3, for Senate and House debates on the Indian appropriation bill for 1881. Senator Maxey's statement appears on page 2827.

41. *The Times*, May 18, 1879; Samuel M. Janney, *Memoirs of Samuel M. Janney*, (4th ed.; Philadelphia, 1890), p. 303.

42. Republican Senator Henry M. Teller (Colorado) and Republican Representatives Dudley C. Haskell and Thomas Ryan (Kansas) and Edward Valentine (Nebraska) were in this category.

laws and liberty there would be "quiet on our borders, and over the buried hatchet will spring up the violet of peace."⁴³

In 1881 a general land allotment plan was introduced in the Senate by Richard Coke of Texas. With its distribution of reservation lands to individual Indian ownership for their use as self-supporting farmers and with the release of millions of surplus acres to settlers, the Coke Bill gained strong support throughout the Plains. This measure also had the support of the Indian rights groups because it promised to speed the transition of the red race from savagery to civilization. For good or ill, the Western plainsman and the Eastern humanitarian were at last in agreement on a plan to bring, what was believed to be, a final solution to the Indian problem.

43. *Medicine Lodge (Kansas) Cresset*, May 8, 1879.