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Samuel Tillet

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SAMUEL TILLET.

FEBRUARY 19, 1836.

Read, and laid upon the table.

Mr. E. WHITTLESEY, from the Committee of Claims made the following

REPORT:

The Committee of Claims instructed by a resolution of the House of Representatives on the 13th of February, to inquire into the expediency of paying to Samuel Tillet, of Kentucky, the amount of a draft drawn by William Steerman, and payable to said Tillet, report:

That the committee addressed a letter to the Secretary of War, requesting information on the subject embraced in the inquiry.

His answer, accompanied by a letter from Mr. Herring, having charge of the office relating to Indian affairs, and extracts from several letters written by or to the Indian Agent of the Choctaws west of the Mississippi, relative to the appointment of Mr. Steerman, school teacher, among the emigrating Choctaw tribe; the delinquency in performing the duty of that appointment, and a letter to Mr. Tillet, stating the reasons why said draft was not paid, are referred to and made a part of this report.

It appears from these papers, that Mr. Steerman was appointed school teacher on the 29th of February, 1832, according to the twentieth article of the treaty with the Choctaw Indians, at Dancing Rabbit creek, on the 27th of September, 1830. His compensation was fixed at \$833 33 per annum. The reason for rejecting the draft, was, that the drawer had not discharged the duties of his appointment.

The committee is not informed of the date of the draft, nor of the time of its having been presented; the report submitted to the committee consisting of the extracts of the letters mentioned, show that Mr. Steerman did not discharge the duties of his appointment, and that he did not intend to discharge them personally, but to hire a young man at about three hundred dollars a year, and pocket the residue of the salary. The committee is not inclined to disturb the decision that has been made by the Secretary of War, in refusing to honor the draft mentioned. The following resolution is submitted.

Resolved, That the draft mentioned ought not to be paid by the United States.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR, OFFICE INDIAN AFFAIRS,
February 17, 1836.

SIR: In compliance with your direction to report upon the letter of the Hon. E. Whittlesey, of the 15th inst. I have the honor to submit the enclosed

copies and extracts of communications to and from the Department, as presenting all the material facts in relation to the claim of Mr. Tillet, founded upon a draft drawn upon the Department by William Steerman, and the reasons assigned for the non-payment thereof.

The letter of Mr. Whittlesey is herewith returned.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

ELBERT HERRING.

Hon. LEWIS CASS,
Secretary of War.

DEPARTMENT OF WAR,
February 29, 1832.

SIR: You are hereby appointed a school teacher in the Choctaw Nation west; under the stipulation of the 20th article of the treaty with the Choctaw Indians, at Dancing Rabbit creek, the 27th September, 1830.

You will report to Major F. M. Armstrong, the agent west of the river Mississippi, who will be notified of your appointment, and through whom you will receive instructions.

Your compensation will be at the rate of eight hundred and thirty-three dollars and thirty-three cents per annum in full for your services, to commence from the time of your acceptance of this appointment.

Very respectfully &c.

LEWIS CASS.

Rev. WILLIAM STEERMAN.

Extract of a letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Rev. William Steerman, dated January 16, 1833.

"The Secretary of War has instructed me to direct you to repair without more than necessary delay, to the Choctaw Agency, in Mississippi, and report to Major F. W. Armstrong, or in his absence, to William Armstrong, Esq. and perform such duties as either of them may assign to you."

Extract of a report from Major F. W. Armstrong, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated, Choctaw Agency, October 15, 1833.

"It becomes my duty to refer to the course of Mr. Steerman. I presume, in compliance with my order of February last, he repaired to the Mountain Fork settlement, from thence to this place, where he remained a few days, and left without making any report or asking leave of absence.

The Indians say he could have got a school-house in the neighborhood, and if so, he might have been teaching, although on a small scale.

I feel it my duty as Agent, to protest against his being paid.

The twentieth article of the late treaty, contemplates three teachers for twenty years, it is therefore impossible that Mr. Steerman's time can be deducted from this provision in the treaty."

Copy of a letter from F. W. Armstrong, to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, dated May 19, 1834.

SIR: In compliance with the note of reference made by the Hon. Secretary of War, on the letter addressed to him by Mr. S. G. Tillet, and which has been placed in my hands calling for a report in reference to the con-

duct of Mr. Steerman, appointed to teach one of the district schools as provided for in the late Choctaw treaty, I have the honor to refer you to my report of October last, together with the following facts, in addition to the objections then made to the course of this gentleman.

1st. I have not received one line from him since making that report in which I objected to his being paid.

2d. I am informed by Dr. David Holt, a gentleman of undoubted veracity, that Mr. Steerman told him that he did not calculate on keeping the school himself, but that he intended settling with his family on a farm in Washington county, in the Territory of Arkansas, where he would reside, and that for *three hundred dollars* he presumed a young man could be employed to keep the school.

The great importance of having teachers with families, who will bring them to reside among the Indians is too well known, to require from me a single remark; besides, I do not hesitate to say, that any person having speculating views of this kind, proves beyond a doubt, that he feels no interest in the future welfare of these unfortunate people. Unless, therefore, a man can show a willingness to exert himself to carry out the objects of the Government, in hastening as far as practicable the blessings of civilization to the Indians, among whom it is his duty to reside, the hopes of the red man must be disappointed, and the efforts of the Government be thwarted.

From the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Major F. W. Armstrong, July 9, 1834.

In consequence of information received from you that Mr. Steerman, who had been appointed a teacher for the Choctaws, has been at his station but a few days, and had left it without permission and been long absent; you will please to give him notice, that his conduct is considered by the Department altogether unjustifiable, that his services as teacher are no longer required, and that he has no good claim for compensation beyond what has been already paid him:

From the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to S. G. Tillet, Esq. July 9, 1834.

Your letter of the 7th of May last to the Secretary of War, in relation to a draft of William Steerman for four hundred and sixteen dollars sixty-six cents, has been referred to this office.

That draft will not be paid by the Department, in consequence of a report made by the Agent for the Choctaws west, in which he protests against Mr. Steerman being paid, alleging that he had been at his station but a few days, and left it without permission.

His entire inattention to his duties as teacher among the Choctaws, and his long absence from his post without permission, impose upon the Department the necessity of withholding money to which he has not entitled himself.

This information is given in consequence of your request to be furnished with the reasons for refusal in case of non-payment of the draft.