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Isaac S. Ketchum

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ISAAC S. KETCHUM.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 324.]

APRIL 10, 1844.

Mr. HUGHES, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, made the following

REPORT :

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the case of Isaac S. Ketchum, asking Congress to allow him the sum of \$557 72 for bringing a deputation of Indian chiefs of the Pottawatomie Indians, located on the Osage river, south of the State of Missouri, submit the following report :

From the evidence in this case, it appears that Mr. Ketchum was appointed special agent by the Government, in February, 1840, for the purpose of inducing the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Pottawatomie Indians to emigrate, under treaty stipulations, to the country assigned them by the Government, on the Osage river; and, in the fall of 1840, he set out with a large band of Indians for their new homes. Whilst on the way, General Brady, who had the direction of the emigration, wrote to the superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis, that the Indians requested Mr. Ketchum to remain with them till the following spring; and this request he (General Brady) was disposed to indulge them in. The superintendent communicated this fact to the Secretary of War, stating, at the same time, that the gentleman concerned in the emigration had reported to him the Indians were the most turbulent and unmanageable he had ever encountered, and that Mr. Ketchum had rendered great service in assembling them, and in inducing them to emigrate; and as there was a large combustible material concentrating at one point on the frontier, it was necessary that Mr. Ketchum should remain, if it was not incompatible with former arrangements, of which the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was the best judge. The department approved of Mr. Ketchum remaining with the Indians; and he, accordingly, did remain with them at their new homes, without any instructions to guide him, and, of course, was left free to act as he thought best for the interest of the Government. Shortly after the arrival of the Indians at their new homes, they became dissatisfied, and many of them threatened to return; and it therefore became necessary, on the part of Mr. Ketchum, to devise some way to prevent the return of the Indians. At last, a council was held on the 24th of December, 1840; the Indians set forth their grievances, and determined to send some of their chiefs to Washington city, and requested Mr. Ketchum to accompany them. Mr. Ketchum accordingly proceeded with a deputation of chiefs, and paid their expenses to Washington city, amounting to the sum of \$557 72. Before Mr. Ketchum proceeded to

Washington city with the deputation of Indian chiefs, he consulted with the chief clerk in the office of superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis, (the superintendent being absent at the time,) as to the propriety of carrying out the will of the Indians, expressed at their council; who immediately wrote to the superintendent, then at Washington city. Mr. Ketchum returned to the Indian country after the deputation of chiefs; and when he reached St. Louis, with the chiefs, the superintendent of Indian affairs (Mr. Pilcher) had returned from Washington city. Mr. Ketchum consulted with the superintendent as to the propriety of proceeding to Washington city with the chiefs; but, after due consideration, the superintendent advised Mr. Ketchum not to proceed—that the Government would not pay the expense. Although thus advised, Mr. Ketchum thought it absolutely necessary, owing to the great dissatisfaction of the Indians, expressed often and repeatedly, to proceed—firmly convinced as he was that, without he did, the Indians would again return to their former homes. To prevent the return of the Indians, and to save the Government expense and trouble, Mr. Ketchum was induced to proceed.

Under all the circumstances, the committee believe Mr. Ketchum acted wisely; and, in all probability, by adopting the course he did, prevented the Indians from returning. The evidence clearly shows that it was the desire of the Indians (expressed in general council) that a deputation of chiefs should visit Washington, to lay before the President of the United States their grievances; and that the expense should be paid out of their annuities. All the facts in this case were presented to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs; but he decided against the claim of Mr. Ketchum, on the ground that he "came on to Washington with the Indian chiefs, not only without authority from the Government, but directly in the face of a prohibition of the superintendent of Indian affairs at St. Louis." The Commissioner further states, that, as the expense of the journey was to be borne by the Indians, to them he must look for payment; that, under the circumstances, he could not sanction the claim.

The evidence, in the opinion of the committee, (owing to the peculiar situation of the Indians, their determination not to remain at their new homes,) fully justified Mr. Ketchum in bringing the chiefs to the city of Washington—particularly as the Indians, in council, agreed that the expense should be paid out of their annuities. The committee, therefore, report a bill allowing Mr. Ketchum the sum of \$557 72, the amount paid out by him, to be paid out of the annuities due the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Pottawatomie Indians.