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John H. Pickering.

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JOHN H. PICKERING.

DECEMBER 19, 1876.—Committed to a Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. VAN VORHES, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. Res. 149.]

The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the joint resolution (H. Res. 149,) for the relief of John H. Pickering, late United States Indian agent, make the following report:

Upon an examination of the matter we find that said resolution was introduced at the suggestion of the honorable Secretary of the Interior, as per his letter of May 13, 1876; that the said honorable Secretary bases his action upon a letter dated May 11, 1876, from John Q. Smith, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, who gives the following statements for information, to wit: That on the 28th of June, 1875, \$2,500 were placed in the hands of John H. Pickering, United States Indian agent, with authority and instructions to erect a suitable school-building and maintain a school among the citizen Pottawatomie Indians; that under a decision of the honorable Second Comptroller of the Treasury these funds were of such nature that they should have lapsed into the Treasury on June 30, 1875; that the said Pickering was not aware of the decision of the said Second Comptroller, and retained the funds and expended them after said date of lapsing; that the said Pickering entered into contract, July 19, 1875, with the lowest bidder, and erected a substantial school-house of stone masonry, 25 by 40 feet, capable of accommodating fifty children; that school was opened in said house, and between thirty and forty Pottawatomie children have since been in attendance; that the contract-price for said school-house was \$1,719; that the balance of the \$2,500 was expended for school-furniture, maintaining the school, &c.; and that the measure has the approval of the Secretary of the Interior and of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. And we are reliably informed that the correspondence, contract for the erection of the school-house, and Mr. Pickering's official reports of the disbursement of these funds, with properly-receipted vouchers, &c., are on file in the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. These we did not have time to examine. But we are satisfied from the evidence already before us that the whole transaction is honorable and just, and Mr. Pickering's difficulty arose from a simple misapprehension of the real nature of the funds for which he had receipted, and is holden under his bonds. We therefore recommend favorable action on this resolution relieving him.