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Letter from the Secretary of War, in relation to the bill (H. R. 1157) to provide for the payment of certain volunteer companies in the service of the United States in the war with Mexico and in the suppression of Indian disturbances in New Mexico

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PAYMENT OF CERTAIN VOLUNTEER COMPANIES OF NEW MEXICO.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN RELATION TO

The bill (H. R. 1157) to provide for the payment of certain volunteer companies in the service of the United States in the war with Mexico and in the suppression of Indian disturbances in New Mexico.

JUNE 19, 1874.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT, May 26, 1874.

The Secretary of War has the honor to report to the House of Representatives, for the information of the Committee on Military Affairs, in reply to letter of said committee requesting information that will enable it to reach intelligent action regarding House bill No. 1157, "to provide for the payment of certain volunteer companies in the service of the United States in the war with Mexico, and in the suppression of Indian disturbances in New Mexico," that on the 20th of March, 1849, by — Orders No. 2, Headquarters Ninth Military Department, Santa Fé, N. Mex., three mounted companies and two of foot were authorized. Four companies appear to have been raised; Chapman's and Valdez's were of the number.

By act approved February 27, 1854, \$135,530.20 were appropriated to pay the expenses of these four companies. Two companies, Chapman's and Valdez's, were so paid.

Captain Skillman was simply a leader of "spy-men," or scouts, numbering fifteen men, who formed a part of the United States forces, and who have no doubt been paid for whatever services they rendered.

It is believed that the bill should not be passed, for the reason that a claim is made therein for two of the companies that have already been paid by the Government.

No evidence or record that any of the companies mentioned in the bill were employed by the State or United States from May 8, 1846—date of battle of Palo Alto—until July 4, 1848, when peace was proclaimed, is on file. The same remarks apply to St. Vrain's company; but no roll of the force nor authority for raising it is on file.

The claimants should file in the War Department the evidence on which the claims are based; then, if the Department is satisfied that the claims, in whole or in part, are just, the proper action can be taken.

It is believed that all just claims have been met under the act of February 27, 1851, (9 Stat., p. 574.)

WM. W. BELKNAP,
Secretary of War.