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**Charles Taylor**

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S. Rep. No. 124, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess. (1865)

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 17, 1865.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MORRILL submitted the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the petition of Charles Taylor of Victoria county, Texas, for compensation for services rendered and supplies advanced to the United States at Chicago, Illinois, during the Black Hawk war of 1832, report:*

That it appears that the petitioner at the above date kept a hotel in Chicago, and run a licensed ferry-boat across the Chicago river. That war having broken out on the frontier with the Indian tribes, the inhabitants of the surrounding country fled to Chicago for safety. Needy and destitute, and failing to find accommodation in the fort at that place, they are represented to have found accommodations, food, and lodgings with the inhabitants of that town, and large numbers with the petitioner, to the number, as he states, of about eight hundred and fifty-five, varying, as to time, from two to twelve days. That before receiving such persons the petitioner applied to the United States Indian agent, Colonel Owen, who advised him to subsist them, and look to the United States government for pay.

That at about that time, as stated by one witness, he, witness, sold to the petitioner beef to the value of \$445, and that petitioner sold a lot of land in Chicago to pay the bill. The petitioner states that he paid out for provisions, aside from the above bill for meat, about \$800, and for forage, bedding, lodgings, &c., thinks himself entitled to at least \$250 more.

That during this war he also lodged and subsisted at his house, at different times, about forty-five militia officers, sick militia-men, and government expressmen, from two to twelve days, for which he claims \$200.

He also states that during this period all the citizens passed over his ferry without payment, including government troops, militia-men, and government employes. The amount claimed for the latter is \$1,520, and a further sum of \$190 for damage done his ferry-boat, used, as he alleges, by the troops for transportation of wood; making in all the sum of \$3,010.

Upon the case stated, it is observable, as a general statement, that there seems to have been no special relation between the petitioner, the United States, and the persons claimed to have been relieved and subsisted, from which an obligation to pay on the part of the government could be inferred. The reference to the Indian agent is not supposed to relieve the case in this respect, as it can hardly be regarded, at best, more than an unauthorized suggestion on the part of that officer.

The claim for subsisting "about eight hundred and fifty-five persons, from two to ten or twelve days," is a statement of the matter so indefinite and unde-

terminated as scarcely to form the "basis of computation, while it cannot fail to raise a well-founded doubt as to its validity. The affidavits of the witnesses to this point go no further than to the general fact that large numbers of persons came back upon Chicago, part of whom were at the hotel of the petitioner.

The item of beef rests upon the statement of the witness that "about that time he, witness, sold to Taylor beef to the value of \$445," and that petitioner sold a lot of land in Chicago to pay that bill.

The item for provisions, bedding, lodgings, &c., rests entirely on the general statement of subsisting the persons as above stated, corroborated by the witnesses as to the fact that this hotel was thronged at that time.

From the statement of the petitioner that he lodged and subsisted during the war, at different times, "about fifty-five militia officers, sick militia-men, and government employés," the committee fail to perceive an inference of indebtedness by the United States. As the hotel does not seem to have been recognized as quarters for United States troops, the ready inference is that of individual responsibility of the persons thus entertained.

From the manner in which the ferry was used, the fact that no claim was made for payment upon the government agents sent to Chicago to pay the expenses of the war at that place, and the absence of definite proof of the use of the ferry by the United States troops, tend strongly to strengthen the presumption against the validity of the claim arising from the lapse of time. The assigned loss of vouchers, at so late a date thereafter, the committee think does not relieve this view of the case.

The petitioner seems not to have kept any account of the names or number of persons subsisted, or of the time entertained, and is able now to make only an indefinite statement of the matter.

When the agents of the government were sent to Chicago for payment of its liabilities he does not seem to have made any demand or stated to them the existence of such claim. He continued to live at Chicago for many years thereafter, and finally went into a remote part of the country without preferring any claim against the government, or any department thereof, and apparently with no intention of making such demand, and finally first makes his claim to Congress in 1856, some twenty-six years after he claims the indebtedness originated.

The committee find the evidence in behalf of the claim too uncertain to justify a recommendation of its payment, and therefore ask to be discharged from its further consideration.