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5-26-1830

## Elisha Whittlesey Report to the U.S. Congress Committee of Claims, May 26, 1830

Elisha Whittlesey

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B. H. REEVES, G. O. SIBLEY AND THOMAS MATHER.  
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May 26, 1830.

Read, and committed to the Committee of the Whole House tomorrow.

Mr. Whittlesey from the Committee of Claims to which was referred the claim of B. H. Reeves, G. O. Sibley, and Thomas Mather, made the following.

REPORT

The Committee on Claims to which was referred the claim of B. H. Reeves, G. C. Sibley, and Thomas Mather, report:

That the Secretary of War addressed a letter to the Chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, accompanied by an account of the persons above named, on which there is said to be due \$1,504,54, for which he requested an appropriation to be made. The chairman of that committee presented the account and the letter mentioned, to the House, and they were referred to this committee. The claimants were appointed by the President commissioners to lay out a road from the Western frontiers of Missouri to the confines of Mexico, under an act passed on the 3rd of March, 1825. By the act \$20,000 were appropriated to extinguish the Indian title to the land, or to purchase the right of way over which the road was to pass; and \$10,000.00 for marking and constructing said road. Copies of the instructions, marked 1 and 2, are filed herewith, and made a part of this report. It appears that the instructions given to the commissioners by the Secretary of War were specific, positive, and definite, as to their duty, and as to the disbursement of the money. They were told that each expenditure must be kept within its appropriate object, and in no event exceeded; and that the expenditures must be arranged under their appropriate heads. The commissioners were informed that they would be entitled to receive \$3 per day, when negotiating treaties, and \$5 per day, when employed in laying out and making the road; and that, when they were acting in the two fold capacities, and were engaged in the two fold duties assigned to them, that they would be entitled to \$8 per day, besides their expenses; but that they would be entitled to the per diem compensation mentioned, when discharging the separate duties. In the account presented B. H. Reeves has charged for his personal services \$3,500, G. C. Sibley \$5,352, and Thomas Mather \$2,360; but they do not state the number of days by either or all of them employed in this business; nor do they discriminate as to the services performed in one or the other capacity. It does not appear from the account that they arranged the expenditures under their appropriate heads, at the time they were made; but after the services were performed and the expenses incurred, they have attempted to make a distribution and have placed under the head of expenses for Indian negotiations \$12,827.10, and for making the road, \$18,677.44. They say they found it impracticable to keep the expenses separate and to present the accounts as they were directed by the instructions. The purchase of the Indian rights fell short of the expense contemplated, while the construction of the road far exceeded it. Whether they are justified in diverting the fund from an object for which it was not wanted, and expending it for another object, the committee will not at present decide; but before they will recommend an appropriation to cover the expenses said to have been incurred over and above the appropriation they require the vouchers of their account to be presented and a particular statement of the number of days each was employed in the service, discriminating as to the particular service performed. The following resolution is submitted:

Resolved, that the claimants are not entitled to relief, for the reasons assigned in this report.