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Letter from George Sibley to Charles Gratiot, June 15, 1832

George Champlin Sibley

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Washington June 15, 1832.

To. Gen. Charles Gratiot
Chief Ensigner War Dept.

Sir:

In consequence of your suggestion to that effect I have proposed, and herewith hand you an abstract of the Voucher pertaining to the disbursement account of the late commissioner on the Road from Missouri to New Mexico, exhibiting or accounting as I am able to do it what portion of the expenditures (as shown by the Vouchers are properly chargeable to each of the two heads of the appropriation respective. From this abstract you will ascertain that in carrying the Act of Congress into effect under which they acted the Commissioners expended \$18670.44 or that branch of their trust relative to the Survey and marking of the Road, instead of \$10,000 the sum named in the Act as for that object.

That or the branch relating to Treaties with Indians they had occasion to use only \$12,827.10 of the \$20,000 specified in the said Act for that purpose and that their whole net expenditures amounted to the sum of \$31,497.54 of which \$1497.54 was furnished by the Commissioners.

It must be perfectly obvious that the Commissioners couldn't have disbursed the appropriation conforming, exactly or in any way nearly to the origin made of it in the Act of Congress, without a great waste of time and money; nor could they, without much careless expense even regulate their expenditures agreeably to the service of the Secretary of War, so as to show with greater accuracy than it is done in the abstract herewith presented the actual expense of surveying and marking the road distinctly from that of the Treaties with Indians.

The twofold duties assigned to the commissioner were found by them on entering the field of those duties to be necessarily blended and inseparably urged in the single object of the Act of Congress which as its little impost was only intended "To Authorise the President of the United States to cause a road to be marked out from the Western frontier of Missouri to the confines of New Mexico.

As to the compensation to the Commissioners for their personal services as intended to be prescribed by the Secretary of War in his letter of Instruction of 26th March 1825, if any doubt could properly arise on that point it may have been entirely removed by the assurances of the Hon. Maj. Brenton and Kane of the Senate (who directed the details of the Bill of furnished the estimate and) that the intention of the Secretary's letter was undoubtedly to fix the pay of the Commissioners at \$8 a day for the whole time they were employed in exactly the Act of Congress. Any other instruction would in fact involve so many gross inconsistencies and responsible services as to render to the Commissioners very exact injustice. It is certain that under no other construction would or could the Commissioner have accepted their appointments.

I will allow myself to hope Sir that with the explanation now given (and I am here purposing to afford any other that may be asked. There accounts will now be adjusted and finally settled.

With great respect

(signed) G. C. Sibley.