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W. W. HOUSE

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MARCH 5, 1926.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed

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Mr. UNDERHILL, from the Committee on Claims, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 8794]

The Committee on Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 8794) to credit the accounts of W. W. House, special disbursing agent, Department of Labor, having considered the same, report thereon with a recommendation that it do pass.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The disbursing agent of the Department of Labor, W. W. House, made certain expenditures in connection with the work of the department, which however, were disallowed by the General Accounting Office. At the time these disbursements were made the department was engaged in certain activities in connection with the prosecution of the war against an alien enemy and the conditions at that period were of such a character that it was impossible to exercise the same degree of care that obtains in peace times.

As the Government received benefit from the disbursements made, your committee recommends favorable consideration of H. R. 8794.

Attached herewith is the correspondence from the Department of Labor, which is made a part of this report.

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
Washington, January 28, 1926.

HON. CHARLES L. UNDERHILL,  
Chairman Committee on Claims,  
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR MR. UNDERHILL: I beg to advise you that under date of February 3, 1925, there was forwarded by this department to the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations a letter setting forth certain disallowances made by the Comptroller General from the accounts of W. W. House, former special disbursing

agent of the United States Employment Service, and requesting that a bill for the relief of Mr. House be presented at the most opportune time. This letter was duly acknowledged by the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and the statement was made that such legislation was not within the jurisdiction of his committee and that it had been forwarded to the chairman of the Committee on Claims.

It now appears that the department letter above referred to can not be located, because of which there is transmitted herewith a copy of said letter with copy of data originally furnished with the request that the matter be taken up during the present session of Congress with a view of relieving Mr. House of those disallowances pending against his accounts.

The department is of the opinion that Mr. House's claim is meritorious, and it has the approval of the department.

Cordially yours,

W. W. HUSBAND,  
Second Assistant Secretary.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,  
Washington, February 3, 1925.

Hon. MARTIN B. MADDEN,  
Chairman Committee on Appropriations,  
House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR CONGRESSMAN: The department begs to advise that in the settlement of the accounts of W. W. House, former special disbursing agent, United States Employment Service, the Comptroller General has disallowed various items amounting to \$1,342.17.

At the time these disbursements were made the department was engaged in major activities in connection with the prosecution of war against an alien enemy and the conditions at that period were of such a character that it was impossible to exercise the same degree of care that obtains in peace times. These payments were made in good faith by Mr. House, and the department feels that he is entitled to congressional relief in the amount stated.

For your information there is transmitted herewith a complete file submitted by this agent which shows in detail the nature and the extent of the disbursements involved.

It is the belief of the department that in all of the items disallowed the Government received benefit, and while it is perhaps possible that certain charges should have had more supporting information, it is contended that this disbursing agent should receive the benefit of the doubt where such information is unobtainable through death of the payee, loss of receipts, or inability to locate correspondence, etc.

The matter of obtaining relief for this agent was presented to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget under date of the 19th ultimo, and that official stated, among other things, that "in your submission of the proposed legislation you may state that the matter has been presented to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, who has advised you that a bill for the relief of Mr. House would not be in conflict with the financial program of the President."

Assuming the claim of this agent to be a meritorious one and for the purpose of obtaining favorable action, if possible during the present session, the following language is suggested in connection with the bill for relief of Mr. House:

"A BILL To credit the accounts of W. W. House, special disbursing agent, Department of Labor

*"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Comptroller General of the United States is authorized and directed to reopen the accounts of W. W. House, special disbursing agent, Department of Labor, involving expenditures made in good faith upon Government business and without fault or negligence on his part, and removed the disallowance of \$1,342.71 made in such accounts by the General Accounting Office, and the proper accounting offices shall thereupon credit his accounts with such sum."*

Cordially yours,

E. J. HENNING, Assistant Secretary.

Statement showing amounts disallowed by the General Accounting Office in settlement of the accounts of W. W. House, former special disbursing agent, Department of Labor

## APPROPRIATION "WAR EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT SERVICE, 1919"

Voucher	Payee	Items disallowed	Amount
2455	H. S. Crocker Co.	Business cards	\$16.50
10502	John Bornam & Son	do	14.50
12746	F. W. Gardiner Co.	do	11.75
12886	Kramer & Chandler	do	9.25
13014	Fox River Leader	do	4.00
13287	Henry E. Penny	do	25.00
13906	do	do	25.00
15306	Aldine Press	do	5.20
16848	Isaac Upham Co.	do	13.50
17424	Standard Printing Co.	do	7.00
18547	Brown Printing Co.	do	222.25
18774	A. Pomerantz & Co.	do	29.50
19086	Kimmel Press	do	3.00
19943	Henry E. Penny	do	12.00
20535	Franklin Printing House	do	3.00
21561	Kimmel Press	do	27.50
22866	Embosotype Co.	do	12.15
24101	Hedstrom Berry Co.	do	5.50
24218	Mirror Printing Co.	do	3.25
8461	W. H. Robb	Automobile maintenance	30.00
10603	do	do	30.00
15424	do	do	30.00
15425	do	do	30.00
14463	R. E. Templeton	Street-car fares	2.04
18356	Carl B. Fritsche	Taxicab fares	14.20
19147	J. A. Van Dis	do	4.95
30682	Jeannette V. Densmore	Travel expenses	711.13
	Total		1,302.17

## APPROPRIATION "NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR"

361	Geo. L. Bell	Per diem	\$24.00
582	J. A. Burkett	do	16.00
	Total		40.00

## RECAPITULATION

War Emergency Employment Service items	\$1,302.17
National security and defense items	40.00
Total originally submitted	1,342.17
Vouchers for automobile maintenance were allowed, May 27, 1925	120.00
Net relief claim	1,222.17

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

## BUSINESS CARDS

These cards were used primarily to advertise the new Federal Employment Service rather than to introduce the representative whose name was printed thereon. Many of these did not even bear the name of a representative but a blank line, on which he might write his name as agent with whom to deal in the event any firm desired to procure help through the United States Employment Service.

## AUTOMOBILE MAINTENANCE

W. H. Robb was granted formal authority, approved by the Secretary of Labor, to incur an expenditure of not exceeding \$30 per month for automobile maintenance. When the General Accounting Office held that he was to be reimbursed only for actual money spent for gasoline, oil, etc., instead of a flat rate of \$30 per month he was unable to produce his receipts. In some instances he had not even asked for receipts nor kept a record thereof.

## STREET-CAR FARES

R. E. Templeton failed to attach to his account a certificate relative to the official character of the street-car fares charged therein. Efforts were made to locate him and have him furnish certificate but his address was unknown. These car fares are believed to have been incurred on official business.

## TAXICAB FARES

Under the regulations of the Department of Labor in effect at the time of payment of these vouchers, charges for taxicab service were allowable if supported by a statement showing the reasons why street cars were not used. Statement was made by the payees that heavy official baggage was the reason for taking a taxi but this was not considered sufficient by the General Accounting Office.

## TRAVEL EXPENSES

Jeannette V. Densmore was furnished a letter of authority approved by the Secretary of Labor to travel to any point in the United States in connection with her work in the Employment Service, which was mainly to organize women's divisions in the branch offices in the West, help in their supervision by direction and information, and assist in procuring jobs for returning soldiers. The travel authority was considered too broad by the General Accounting Office, it being held that the cities visited should have been mentioned in the letter authorizing travel.

## PER DIEM IN LIEU OF SUBSISTENCE

It was the intention of the Employment Service to change the official station of Mr. Bell to Washington, D. C., upon reporting for duty there, but through oversight this was not done, thereby resulting in an apparent overpayment.

Mr. Burket charged per diem while in a travel status, but was sick a few days while in the field and no statement was secured from him relative to the performance of any work on those days. These per diem charges were paid out of the appropriation for national security and defense, Department of Labor.

