

LEWIS ROBERTS.

[To accompany bill S. No. 234.]

MAY 2, 1864.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WINDOM, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, made the following

R E P O R T .

*The Committee on Indian Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of Lewis Roberts, having had the same under consideration, report :*

The memorialist in this case was owner of the steamer *Globe*, who was employed by R. G. Murphy, agent of the Sioux Indians in Minnesota, in October, 1855, to convey certain indemnity goods from St. Paul to the Redwood agency, in that State; and while laden with such goods, and having the said agent on board, with his indemnity money, &c., when within ten miles of their place of destination, being, on account of the low stage of water, unable to proceed further by boat, at the direction of the said Indian agent he put the cargo on shore in a safe and suitable place, where it was protected from the weather, and placed under a guard, with the intention of transporting it overland to the agency.

Shortly after the goods were landed, as aforesaid, the prairie was set on fire, and the goods, corresponding with the amount charged in his account, *viz*: 85 barrels flour, 5 barrels mess pork, 41 kegs lard, and 180 sacks of corn, were burnt before they could be rescued from the flames: whereupon the Indian agent directed Captain Roberts to return to St. Paul and purchase a similar amount of goods, and forward them without delay, as he feared the Indians might give trouble if these goods were not delivered to them in due time. And the agent assured Captain Roberts that he would do all in his power to have him speedily repaid the outlay. The memorialist at once repaired to St. Paul, and out of his own funds purchased the goods and conveyed them overland to the agency. And it is for this advance of money that he brings this claim.

The facts, as set forth in this memorial, under oath, are fully sustained by the testimony.

R. G. Murphy, the Indian agent, states that the accident to the goods was unavoidable, and the purchase to replace them was made by his direction; and he promised the justice and liberality of the government in reimbursing him, as it was important that the Indians should not be disappointed in receiving these goods at the proper time.

Odebon Benoit testifies that he was employed on board the *Globe* at the time of the accident; when the goods were put ashore he was put in charge of them, and that when the fire occurred he succeeded in rescuing from it all the cargo except the goods charged on Captain Roberts's account.

Edwin Bell testifies that he, too, was employed on board the Globe at the time these goods were lost, and that everything that was done in the premises was done by the direction of the Indian agent, who was present.

Edward McLagan was clerk of the Globe at the time of this accident, and fully corroborates the testimony of the other witnesses.

Joseph R. Brown, Sioux agent, certifies that Lewis Roberts furnished the goods as charged at great expense to himself, and that the prices at which they are charged were reasonable and just; and William J. Cullen, Indian superintendent, having examined the evidence in this case, states that Lewis Roberts has a just charge for indemnity against the United States, and that Roberts is an honest and honorable man, who would not be a party to an improper transaction.

The committee having fully examined this case, are satisfied that it ought to be paid, and accordingly report a bill for his relief, and recommend its passage.