

33. Creation of a Bureau of Indian Affairs in the War Department

March 11, 1824

Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, without special congressional authorization, set up a "Bureau of Indian Affairs" within his department and assigned the duties of the office to Thomas L. McKenney. McKenney held the office until dismissed by President Jackson in 1830. Congress confirmed the position, then designated "Commissioner of Indian Affairs," in 1832.

Department of War
March 11th, 1824

SIR: To you are assigned the duties [of] the Bureau of Indian Affairs in this Department, for the faithful performance of which you will be responsible. Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Miller are assigned to you, the former as chief, and the latter as assistant clerk.

You will take charge of the appropriations for annuities, and of the current ex-

penses, and all warrants on the same will be issued on your requisitions on the Secretary of War, taking special care that no requisition be issued, but in cases where the money previously remitted has been satisfactorily accounted for, and on estimates in detail, approved by you, for the sum required. You will receive and examine the accounts and vouchers for the expenditure thereof, and will pass them over to the proper

Auditor's Office for settlement, after examination and approval by you; submitting such items for the sanction of this Department as may require its approval. The administration of the fund for the civilization of the Indians is also committed to your charge, under the regulations established by the Department. You are also charged with the examination of the claims arising out of the laws regulating the intercourse with Indian Tribes, and will, after examining and briefing the same, report them to this Department, endorsing a

recommendation for their allowance or disallowance.

The ordinary correspondence with the superintendents, the agents, and sub-agents, will pass through your Bureau.

I have the honor to be,
Your obedient servant,
J. C. Calhoun

Thos. L. M'Kenney, Esq.

[*House Document* no. 146, 19th Cong., 1st sess., serial 138, p. 6.]

34. Authorization of Treaties; Trade Regulations

May 25, 1824