

54. Transfer of Indian Affairs to the Department of the Interior

March 3, 1849

At a time of relative tranquillity on the frontier, responsibility for Indian affairs was transferred from the War Department to the newly created Department of the Interior. Insistent attempts in the post-Civil War decades to return the Indian bureau to the War Department were unsuccessful.

An Act to establish the Home Department, and to provide for the Treasury Department an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and a Commissioner of the Customs.

Be it enacted . . . , That, from and after the passage of this act, there shall be created a new executive department of the government

of the United States, to be called the Department of the Interior; the head of which department shall be called the Secretary of the Interior, who shall be appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and who shall hold his office by the same tenure, and receive the same salary, as the Secretaries

of the other executive departments, and who shall perform all the duties assigned to him by this act. . . .

SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That the Secretary of the Interior shall exercise the supervisory and appellate powers now exercised by the Secretary of the War Department, in relation to all the acts of the Commissioner of

Indian Affairs; and shall sign all requisitions for the advance or payment of money out of the treasury, on estimates or accounts, subject to the same adjustment or control now exercised on similiar estimates or accounts by the Second Auditor and Second Comptroller of the Treasury. . . .

[*U.S. Statutes at Large*, 9:395.]