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DEC 24 1969

R. T. Erickson
Authorized Certifying Officer
Bureau of Reclamation - Region 4
United States Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 11568
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Dear Mr. Erickson:

Your letter of November 7, 1969, reference 4-360, asks whether the amount of \$73.79 on the enclosed voucher which represents expenses claimed by Mr. Larry D. Schulz for his occupancy of temporary quarters from July 6 to 10, 1969, incident to transfer of his official station from Casper, Wyoming, to Collbran, Colorado, may be certified for payment.

The matter also concerns the policy provisions contained in section 2.5a of Bureau of the Budget Circular No. A-56, Revised, and in the Bureau of Reclamation Instructions supplement which, in part, is as follows:

"Section 2.5a of Circular A-56 provides that allowances for temporary quarters should be reduced or avoided if a round trip to seek permanent residence has been made or if the employee has had adequate opportunity to complete arrangements for permanent quarters. Within the Bureau of Reclamation, the maximum of 30 days allowable for subsistence expenses while occupying temporary quarters shall be reduced by the number of days taken during an advance trip to search for permanent housing. This figure represents a maximum which may be reduced by local determination in individual cases."

You say that because adequate housing is relatively difficult to locate in Collbran the travel authorization provided for the maximum of 6 days for the round trip to seek permanent residence quarters and, thus, a maximum of 24 days was stated for occupying temporary quarters. The house hunting trip by Mr. Schulz utilized only 2½ days. After he and his family arrived in Collbran (12 noon of June 12) they could not move into the new residence until about July 14 when the occupants thereof had moved out.

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Temporary quarters
Time limitation

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However, because of the above-quoted restriction in Reclamation Instructions and the 24 days limitation stated in item 14 of the travel authorization, Mr. Schulz was paid for temporary quarters occupancy from June 12 through July 5 only on voucher schedule No. 1114. As you point out the quoted Reclamation Instructions clearly indicate that the 30-day period which normally may be allowable for temporary quarters should be reduced by the number of days which are taken during the round trip to seek permanent quarters. Also, although no patent error occurred in preparing the travel authorization, you say it was intended that the maximum allowable be authorized for temporary quarters; that the fact that Mr. Schulz used only 2½ days to locate a house was very unusual for the Colibran area and such fact could not be predetermined when the travel authorization was prepared. Thus, it appears that, except for the house hunting trip, it was intended that 30 days occupancy of temporary quarters could be allowed.

In the circumstances, we would not object to favorable action on the claim based upon a memorandum in clarification of items 13 and 14, consistent with our understanding of the case as set forth above, by the official who issued the original travel authorization. See the enclosed copy of our decision, B-168063, dated November 7, 1969.

The voucher, with related papers, is returned herewith for handling in accordance with the foregoing.

Sincerely yours,

R. F. Keller

Assistant Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosures