

DECISION

**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

60152
NOV 14 1975

FILE: B-183908

DATE:

MATTER OF:

Robert W. West-Reimbursement for a house-
hunting trip. 97746

DIGEST:

Employee may be reimbursed for househunting trip expenses even though he did not return to former station as househunting trip was accomplished during week before employee was scheduled to report to new station. It was in interest of Government for employee to remain at new station instead of incurring unnecessary travel expenses in a return trip to old station.

Ms. Marie A. Watkins, an authorized certifying officer with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Department of the Treasury, requests an advance decision on the propriety of paying the reclaim of Mr. Robert W. West for expenses incurred during a househunting trip in connection with a permanent change of station from New Haven, Connecticut, to Washington, D.C. Mr. West's claim for househunting expenses was originally disallowed as he remained in Washington at the end of the trip instead of returning to Connecticut.

The record shows that Mr. West was officially notified of his transfer on August 8, 1973. Form 4253, Authorization for Moving Expenses, was signed by the authorizing officer on August 3, 1973. Mr. West's reporting date was to be August 20, 1973. However, the employee states that he did not receive notification that Form 4253 had been approved until August 15 or 16. At that time he requested that his reporting date be postponed until August 27, 1973. The request was granted, and the househunting trip began on August 21, 1973.

In B-165825, January 29, 1969, we allowed payment for the expenses of a househunting trip where the employee remained at his new duty station. In that decision we pointed out that although the regulations authorize round trip travel for an employee and his wife to seek permanent quarters, the regulations also contain guidelines to eliminate unnecessary trips. In the instant case, as in B-165825, supra, the househunting trip and the reporting date were so close together that it was in the

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interest of the Government for the employee to have remained at his new duty station instead of creating unnecessary travel expenses by returning to his former station.

Accordingly, the voucher is returned and may be certified for payment, if otherwise correct.

MILTON SOCOLAR

For the Comptroller General
of the United States