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IMPROVEMENT MADE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY.

Payment for placing a wooden floor border in a room rented by a public officer is not authorized.

*(Comptroller Tracwell to the secretary and disbursing agent of the Paris Exposition, February 16, 1899.)*

I have received your letter of the 10th instant, inclosing two accounts which have been presented to you for payment from the appropriation for the International Exposition at Paris in 1900, and asking if you are authorized to pay the same.

One is a bill for \$35 for a wooden floor border placed in the office of the director of affairs of the Exposition in Chicago. I am informed that the office is a rented one, and not in a building owned by the United States.

It has been held by this office that repairs to private property are not usually a proper charge against the Government (3 Comp. Dec., 196); and still less would be such a permanent improvement to the realty as is herein shown. The account should not be paid by you.

The other claim, which is one of several presented to you for payment, is for \$14.95 for furnishing blouse, pants, and cap for a messenger boy, presumably for a uniform.

This account has been approved by the commissioner-general, who by the act of July 1, 1898, is authorized to "control the expenditures *incident to and necessary for* the proper installation and exhibit," which is therein provided for. I know of no law which forbids such an expenditure, and whatever might be my views as to its necessity and propriety, the responsibility of determining whether this expense is incident, to and necessary for the purposes of the act rests with the officer charged with its enforcement.