

Stamps may
be put on prepaid
letters.

Drop-letters.

Additional
charge on adver-
tised letters.

Penalty for
selling postage
stamps or envel-
opes at an ad-
vanced rate.

When this act
shall take effect.

Franking priv-
ileges not
affected.

Registration of
valuable letters.

Registration not
compulsory; not
to make depart-
ment liable for
loss.

are to or from a foreign country, the postages as above specified shall be prepaid, except upon letters and packages addressed to officers of the government on official business, which shall be so marked on the envelope. And from and after the first day of January, eighteen hundred and fifty-six, the Postmaster-General may require postmasters to place postage stamps upon all prepaid letters upon which such stamps may not have been placed by the writers.

And all drop-letters, or letters placed in any post-office not for transmission through the mail, but for delivery only, shall be charged with postage at the rate of one cent each; and all letters which shall hereafter be advertised as remaining over, or uncalled for, in any post-office, shall be charged with one cent each, in addition to the regular postage, both to be accounted for as other postages now are.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall not be lawful for any postmaster or other person to sell any postage stamp or stamped envelope for any larger sum than that indicated upon the face of such postage stamp or for a larger sum than that charged therefor by the Post-Office Department; and any person who shall violate this provision shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten, nor more than five hundred dollars. This act to take effect and be in force from and after the commencement of the next fiscal quarter after its passage. *Provided*, That nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to alter the laws in relation to the franking privilege.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That for the greater security of valuable letters posted for transmission in the mails of the United States, the Postmaster-General be, and hereby is, authorized to establish a uniform plan for the registration of such letters on application of parties posting the same, and to require the prepayment of the postage, as well as a registration fee of five cents on every such letter or packet, to be accounted for by postmasters receiving the same in such manner as the Postmaster-General shall direct: *Provided, however*, That such registration shall not be compulsory; and it shall not render the Post-Office Department or its revenue liable for the loss of such letters or packets, or the contents thereof.

APPROVED, March 3, 1855.

March 4, 1855.

CHAP. CLXXIV.—*An Act to improve the Laws of the District of Columbia, and to codify the same.*

Codification of
laws of district
of Columbia.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States is hereby authorized, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to appoint two persons, learned in the law, to revise, simplify, digest, and codify the laws of said District; and, also, the rules and principles of practice, of pleadings, of evidence, and conveyancing; and, also, to add thereto, and codify such laws of the State of Maryland as may be, or become in force during the preparation of said code, and applicable to the circumstances and condition of said District; and the said code shall be constructed according to a simple method, and be expressed in language concise and plain, and, far as possible, be made level to the understanding of a person of ordinary intelligence and education; and it shall contain a full and particular index to all its contents; and the preparation of the said code shall be made under the superintendence and revision of the Attorney-General of the United States, and as the same progresses shall be printed, under his direction; and the said codifiers shall each be paid for their services, out of the treasury of the United States, at the rate of three thousand dollars a year. And the board of aldermen and common council of the city of

Washington may together elect five competent persons; and the board of aldermen and council of Georgetown may elect two competent persons; and the levy court of the county of Washington may elect one competent person; which persons together shall compose a board, to consider, at convenient seasons, the provisions of said code, as it may be prepared; and any three of said persons shall constitute a quorum of said board; and the said code, or such provisions thereof as may be approved by a majority of said board, shall be adopted, and become the law of said District, as hereinafter provided. And it shall be the duty of the said persons who may be appointed to codify the said laws, to attend, and, also, the said Attorney-General may attend the meetings of said board, to explain the several provisions of the said code. And when the said code, and the provisions thereof, shall have been adopted by the said board, or by a majority thereof, they shall certify the same to the President of the United States, who shall thereupon cause it to be published in a neat and convenient form, and to be substantially bound; and he shall cause a sufficient number of volumes of said code to be printed and bound as may be necessary for the amplest distribution of the same among the people of said District, and for the preservation of said code; and a copy thereof shall be furnished to every justice of the peace, and every judge, to each court, to each clerk of said court, to each coroner, to said levy court, to each public school, to each public library, to each public department of government, and to the mayors and each of the councils of Washington and Georgetown, to be by them kept and carefully preserved, and transferred to their several successors in office. And the said code, so deposited with said clerks of courts and justices of the peace, shall at all times be open in their several offices, for the inspection and information of the people of said District, and others who may desire to consult the same. And when the said code shall be printed and distributed, the President of the United States shall, by his proclamation, appoint a time and places in the said District for taking the sense of the citizens thereof, for or against the adoption of the said code; and he shall cause judges to be selected who shall preside at such election, and he shall provide and proclaim the mode and rules of conducting the same, provided every free white male citizen of the United States, above the age of twenty-one years, who has resided in the said District for one year next preceding said election, shall be permitted to vote thereat; and the result of said election shall be reported to the said President, and the same, with the said code, be by him reported to Congress, and when ratified and approved by the same, he shall, by his proclamation, declare it to be in force, from the day of the date thereof, as the law of the said District of Columbia; and the same, when so proclaimed, shall thereafter be, and remain as such, without any further act or proceedings to that effect, until altered or repealed by the Congress of the United States. And the persons who may compose said board, or such of them as may act on the same, shall be paid out of the treasury of the United States a reasonable compensation for their services, according to the time employed by them respectively upon the same: *Provided*, That the said code shall be reported to Congress on or before the first Monday in December, in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-seven.

APPROVED, March 3, 1855.

CHAP. CLXXV.—*An Act making Appropriations for the Civil and Diplomatic Expenses of Government, for the year ending the thirtieth of June, eighteen hundred and fifty-six, and for other Purposes.*

March 3, 1855.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums be, and the same are hereby, appropriated, out of any money in the treasury