May 5, 1866.

CHAP LXXIV. — *An Act to encourage Telegraphic Communication between the United States and the Island of Cuba and other West India Islands and the Bahamas.*

Preamble.

Whereas James A. Scrymser, Alfred Pell, junior, Alexander Hamilton, junior, Oliver K. King, Maturin L. Delafield, William F. Smith, and James M. Digges, their associates, successors, and assigns, persons composing the International Ocean Telegraph Company, an incorporated company chartered by the State of New York, are desirous of establishing a line of submarine telegraphic communication between the United States of America and the West India Islands and the Bahamas: Now, therefore, in order to facilitate the said enterprise —

International Ocean Telegraph Company to have sole privilege for fourteen years to lay and operate telegraph lines between Florida and Cuba, &c.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the said International Ocean Telegraph Company, incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, their successors and assigns, shall have the sole privilege for a period of fourteen years from the approval of this act, to lay, construct, land, maintain, and operate telegraphic or magnetic lines or cables in and over the waters, reefs, islands, shores, and lands, over which the United States have jurisdiction, from the shores of the State of Florida, in the said United States, to the Island of Cuba and the Bahamas, either or both, and other West India Islands.

The United States to have free use of such lines.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the said International Ocean Telegraph Company shall, at all times give the United States the free use of said cable or cables, to a telegraphic operator of its own selection, to transmit any messages to and from its military, naval, and diplomatic or consular agents; and the said company shall keep all its lines open to the public for the transmission for daily publication of market and commercial reports and intelligence, and all messages, despatches and communications shall be forwarded in the order in which they shall be received: and the said company shall not be permitted to charge and collect for messages transmitted through any of its submarine cables more than the rate of three dollars and fifty cents for messages of ten words, subject, however, to the power of Congress to alter and determine said rates: *Provided*, That the said International Ocean Telegraph Company shall, within the period of three years from the passage of this act, cause the said submarine telegraphic cable or cables to be laid down, and that the said cable or cables shall be in successful operation for the transmission of messages within the said period of five years; otherwise, this grant to be null and void.

Lines to be kept open, and messages sent in order of their reception.

Charges.

Lines to be laid in three years, and in operation in five years.

This act may be altered or repealed.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That Congress shall have power, at any time, to alter or repeal the foregoing act.

Approved, May 5, 1866.

May 9, 1866.

CHAP. LXXV. — *An Act to extend the Jurisdiction of the Court of Claims.*

Court of Claims to hear and determine certain claims.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Court of Claims shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine the claim of any paymaster, quartermaster, commissary of subsistence, or other disbursing officer of the United States, or of his administrators or executors, for relief from responsibility on account of losses by capture or otherwise, while in the line of his duty, of government funds, vouchers, records, and papers in his charge, and for which such officer was and is held responsible: *Provided*, That an appeal may be taken to the Supreme Court, as in other cases.

Appeal.

Decree, and its effect.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That whenever said court shall have ascertained the facts of any such loss to have been without fault or neglect on the part of any such officer, it shall make a decree, setting forth the amount thereof, upon which the proper accounting officers of the treasury shall allow to such officer the amount so decreed as a credit in the settlement of his accounts.

Approved, May 9, 1866.

AUTHENTICATED U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION GPO