

them, desiring such use shall fail to agree upon the sum or sums to be paid, or upon rules and conditions to which each shall conform in using said bridges and approaches, all matters at issue between them shall be decided by the Secretary of War upon a hearing of the allegations and proofs of the parties.

Commencement and completion.

Proviso.
Separate liability of each bridge.

SEC. 6. That this Act shall be null and void if actual construction of the bridges herein authorized be not commenced within one year and completed within three years from the date hereof: *Provided*, That the commencement and completion of either of said bridges in accordance with this Act shall be deemed a compliance with this section, as to such bridge, and the rights of said company with respect to such bridge, shall not be affected by failure to commence or complete the other of said bridges.

Amendment, etc.

SEC. 7. That the right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act is hereby expressly reserved.

Approved, February 17, 1897.

February 17, 1897.

CHAP. 241.—An Act To enable certain persons in the State of Mississippi to procure title to public lands.

Mississippi.
Purchasers of swamp lands on grant to Mobile and Ohio Railroad given preference to enter same.

Proviso.
Rights of homestead claimants.

Purchasers at tax sales.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all persons who, prior to January nineteenth, eighteen hundred and ninety-five, purchased in good faith from the State of Mississippi any lands within the six miles or granted limits of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, and which lands were included in approved swamp-land list numbered seven, Augusta series, their heirs or assigns, shall have the preference right for one year from the passage of this Act to enter under the homestead laws of the United States not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres of the lands so purchased by them from the State of Mississippi and to purchase not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres additional of such lands at one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, or, if they elect not to avail themselves of the homestead law, to purchase three hundred and twenty acres of such land: *Provided, however*, That this Act shall not affect the rights of homestead claimants who, between the sixteenth day of February, eighteen hundred and ninety-five, and the twenty-seventh day of May, eighteen hundred and ninety-six, made settlements and entries or filed with the local land officers applications to enter in good faith, under the homestead laws, any of the lands included in the provisions of this Act not occupied or actually and substantially improved by such purchasers from the State.

SEC. 2. That all persons who have legally purchased any of the lands aforesaid at tax sales shall be considered assigns within the meaning of this Act.

Approved, February 17, 1897.

February 17, 1897.

CHAP. 242.—An Act To amend an Act entitled "An Act to authorize the Chattanooga Western Railway Company to construct a bridge across the Tennessee River near Chattanooga," giving the said company more time in which to begin and complete said bridge.

Bridge across Tennessee River at Chattanooga, Tenn.
Vol. 28, p. 30.

Time extended for construction.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section five of an Act entitled "An Act to authorize the Chattanooga Western Railway Company to construct a bridge across the Tennessee River near Chattanooga," approved January twenty-seventh, eighteen hundred and ninety-four, be, and the same is hereby, amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 5. That the right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act is hereby expressly reserved; and any alterations or changes that may be required by Congress in the bridge constructed under this Act, or its entire