

Pass outlet of the Mississippi River, as the same now exists, the Secretary of War shall withhold so much of the money then to be paid to the executors of the estate of James B. Eads as such executors, or to the associates of the said James B. Eads, jointly or severally, as shall have been expended under the authority of this Act, until the same shall be judicially or otherwise legally determined in favor of such executors as such executors, or said associates of James B. Eads, jointly or severally.

Approved, February 26, 1897.

February 26, 1897.

CHAP. 334.—An Act To authorize the Montgomery, Hayneville and Camden Railroad Company to construct and maintain a bridge across the Alabama River between Lower Peachtree and Prairie Bluff, Alabama.

Montgomery,
Hayneville and Camden
Railroad Company may bridge Ala-
bama River, Alabama.

Location.

Provisos.
Lawful structure
and post route.

Postal telegraph.
Use by other com-
panies.

Compensation.

Secretary of War to
approve plans, etc.

Amendment, etc.

Changes.

Draw.

Lights, etc.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Montgomery, Hayneville and Camden Railroad Company, a corporation created and existing under an act of the general assembly of the State of Alabama, be, and is hereby, authorized to construct and maintain a railroad bridge, for the passage of railway engines and cars across the Alabama River at such point as may be selected by such company, between Lower Peachtree and Prairie Bluff, in the State of Alabama, said bridge to be so constructed as not to obstruct the navigation of said river and to be provided with a suitable draw: *Provided,* That any bridge constructed under this Act and according to its limitations shall be a lawful structure, and shall be known and recognized as a post route, and the same is hereby declared to be a post route, and the United States shall have the right of way for a postal telegraph across said bridge: *Provided also,* That all railroad companies desiring the use of said bridge shall have and be entitled to equal rights and privileges relative to the passage of railway trains or cars over the same, and over the approaches thereto, upon payment of a reasonable compensation for such use; and in case of any disagreement between the parties in regard to the terms of such use or the sums to be paid all matters at issue shall be determined by the Secretary of War upon hearing the allegations and proofs submitted to him.

SEC. 2. That the bridge authorized to be constructed under this Act shall be located and built under and subject to such regulations for the security of the navigation of said river as the Secretary of War shall prescribe; and the said company or corporation shall submit to the Secretary of War, for his examination and approval, a design and drawing of the proposed bridge and a map of the location, giving for the space of one-half mile above and one-half mile below the proposed location the topography of the banks of the river, the shore lines at high and low water, the direction and strength of the currents, and the soundings, accurately showing the bed of the stream, and shall furnish such other information as may be required for a full and satisfactory understanding of the subject; and until the said plan and location of the bridge are approved by the Secretary of War no work upon the bridge shall be commenced, and should any change be made in the plan of said bridge during the progress of construction such change shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary of War.

SEC. 3. That Congress reserves the right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act at any time, and that if at any time navigation of said river shall in any manner be obstructed or impaired by the said bridge the Secretary of War shall have authority, and it shall be his duty, to require the said bridge company to alter and change the said bridge, at its own expense, in such manner as may be proper to secure free and complete navigation without impediment.

SEC. 4. That the draw provided for the bridge herein authorized to be constructed shall be opened promptly, upon reasonable signal, for the passing of boats; and said company or corporation shall maintain,

at its own expense, from sunset to sunrise, such lights or other signals on said bridge as the Light-House Board shall prescribe.

SEC. 5. That all telephone and telegraph companies shall be granted equal rights and privileges in the construction and operation of their lines across said bridge; and if actual construction of the bridge herein authorized shall not be commenced within one year from the passage of this Act, and be completed within three years from same date, the rights and privileges hereby granted shall cease and be determined.

Approved, February 26, 1897.

Telegraph and telephone lines.

Commencement and completion.

CHAP. 335.—An Act To provide for the use and occupation of reservoir sites reserved.

February 26, 1897.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all reservoir sites reserved or to be reserved shall be open to use and occupation under the right-of-way Act of March third, eighteen hundred and ninety-one. And any State is hereby authorized to improve and occupy such reservoir sites to the same extent as an individual or private corporation, under such rules and regulations as the Secretary of the Interior may prescribe: *Provided,* That the charges for water coming in whole or part from reservoir sites used or occupied under the provisions of this Act shall always be subject to the control and regulation of the respective States and Territories in which such reservoirs are in whole or part situate.

Public lands.
Rights of way, reservoir sites.
Vol. 26, p. 1101.

Proviso.
Water charges.

Approved, February 26, 1897.

CHAP. 336.—An Act Concerning certain homestead lands in Florida.

February 26, 1897.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all persons actually occupying homesteads in good faith in any of the following-named counties, in said State of Florida, to wit, Alachua, Lafayette, Levy, Suwannee, Bradford, Baker, and Columbia, at the time of the storm on or about September twenty-ninth, eighteen hundred and ninety-six, are hereby granted the right to sell or otherwise dispose of the fallen timber on their homestead entries felled by said storm, and to devote the proceeds of such sale or barter to the improvement of their homesteads or support of themselves or their families.

Florida.
Timber destroyed by cyclone may be sold by homestead settlers.

Approved, February 26, 1897.

CHAP. 340.—An Act To amend the postal laws, providing limited indemnity for loss of registered mail matter.

February 27, 1897.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section thirty-nine hundred and twenty-six of the Revised Statutes be amended so as to read as follows:

Postal service.

“SEC. 3926. For the greater security of valuable mail matter the Postmaster-General may establish a uniform system of registration, and as a part of such system he may provide rules under which the sender or owners of first-class registered matter shall be indemnified for losses thereof in the mails, the indemnity to be paid out of the postal revenues, but in no case to exceed ten dollars for any one registered piece, or the actual value thereof when that is less than ten dollars, and for which no other compensation or reimbursement to the loser has been made: *Provided,* That the Post-Office Department or its revenues shall not be liable for the loss of any other mail matter on account of its having been registered.”

Indemnity for losses of registered matter.
R. S., sec. 3926, p. 762, amended.

Limit.

Proviso.
Confined to first-class matter.

Approved, February 27, 1897.