

conveying the mail, shall decline to sell and deliver to the United States such ship or ships, or shall refuse to name and appoint appraisers to value the same, agreeably to the provisions of said act, or the same having been appraised and valued, shall refuse to convey and deliver said ship or ships to the United States, on the payment, or tender of payment, by the United States, of the sum at which the said ship or ships may have been appraised and valued, such person or persons so offending shall forfeit a sum not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars, to be recovered in any proper action, for the use of the treasury of the United States; and in case of refusal or inability to pay the same, shall be liable to be imprisoned not exceeding one year, at the discretion of the court rendering judgment for such penalty.

Postmaster-General may impose fines on contractors for unreasonable or unnecessary delay, &c.

Proviso.

Contracts for foreign mail service not to be assignable.

Proviso.

SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That to secure the regular transmission of the mail to and from foreign countries, the Postmaster-General be, and he is hereby, authorized and required to impose fines on contractors, for any unreasonable or unnecessary delay in the departure of such mails, or in the performance of the trip: *Provided*, That the fine for any one default shall not exceed one half of the contract price paid for the trip.

SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall not be lawful for any contractor for transporting the mail to any foreign country to assign or transfer his contracts; and all such assignments or transfers shall be null and void: *Provided*, That assignments and transfers which have been made and accepted by the Postmaster-General or the Secretary of the Navy before the passage of this act, shall not be affected by this section.

APPROVED, June 27, 1848.

June 28, 1848.

CHAP. LXXXII. — *An Act concerning the taking of official Oaths in the District of Columbia.*

Any one of the judges of the Circuit Court, or the judge of the Criminal Court, of the District of Columbia, may administer official oaths.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That all official oaths required by law to be taken by officers of the United States may, in the District of Columbia, be administered and certified by any one of the judges of the Circuit Court, or by the judge of the Criminal Court of the said District.

APPROVED, June 28, 1848.

June 28, 1848.

CHAP. LXXXIII. — *An Act respecting certain Surveys in the State of Florida.*

Certain islands, keys, and other lands in South Florida to be surveyed.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the commissioner of the General Land Office is hereby authorized and directed to cause to be surveyed, as soon as practicable, the islands and keys, and other lands in South Florida, interspersed with water, which cannot conveniently be connected with the regular public surveys; and also the private claims or grants which have been duly confirmed, situate in said State; and that such surveys of said islands, keys, and lands interspersed with water as aforesaid may be made by such persons on such terms, and in such mode and manner, as said commissioner may deem most expedient and proper, without connection thereof with the other public surveys, by township lines; but the expense thereof shall not exceed the maximum price per mile heretofore allowed for surveys by the United States in other States or Territories; and the surveys of said private claims or grants may be made by such persons, and on such terms, as said commissioner may deem most expedient and proper; but the expense thereof shall not in any case exceed twenty

Expense of surveys limited.

five per centum on the said price heretofore allowed in addition to such price: *Provided, however,* That it shall be the duty of the President at some convenient time, and before offering any of said islands for sale, to have an examination made by, and a report from, a board of engineers, to ascertain whether any of said islands or parts of them, and if so, which of them, should be reserved from sale for the use of the United States; and that all islands or parts of islands recommended by such board to be reserved for public use shall be reserved from sale.

APPROVED, June 28, 1848.

Provision for an examination before sale.

CHAP. XC. — *An Act for the Relief of the bona fide Settlers under the Acts for the armed Occupation and Settlement of a Part of the Territory of Florida.*

July 1, 1848.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That in all cases in which proof shall be made to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of the General Land Office that any person who obtained a permit under the act entitled "An Act to provide for the armed occupation and settlement of the unsettled part of the peninsula of Florida," approved August fourth, eighteen hundred and forty-two, and who was an occupant under that act, and the act amendatory thereof, approved June fifteenth, eighteen hundred and forty-four, and who actually occupied or settled under said acts, and did not voluntarily relinquish and abandon the same, but continued to reside on said frontier south of said line specified in said act of eighteen hundred and forty-two, thereby aiding to effect the object of said acts, and who has not received the lands provided by said acts, such settler shall be entitled to a grant and patent for the land so occupied or settled by him, the same as if all the conditions and stipulations of said acts and requirements of the General Land Office in relation thereto had been fully and strictly fulfilled and complied with.

Bona fide settlers under the act for the armed occupation and settlement of a part of the Territory of Florida to be entitled to patents for the lands settled and occupied by them.

1842, ch. 122.

1844, ch. 71.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted,* That in all cases where the lands settled or occupied by such settler, or any part thereof, were or are not legally subject to donation under the said acts on any account whatever, then such settler may locate his right, or the part so interfered with, on any vacant public lands in the same, or any adjacent township.

Settlers may locate their rights, if interfered with, by prior claims on other lands in the same or adjacent township.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That this act shall extend to, and be construed and executed for, the benefit of the widow and heirs of any settler, according to the principles of the fifth section of said first above-recited act.

This act extended to widows and heirs of settlers.

SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted,* That immediately after the passage of this act, the Secretary of the Treasury shall appoint an agent to proceed forthwith to the different county seats of the counties of the State of Florida, where said lands lie, who shall attend at least ten successive days at each county seat, if so long time be necessary, to take and receive proof by depositions before him, or in such manner as he may prescribe in relation to such settlement or occupation, and of settlers being entitled under this act to a grant or donation of land as aforesaid; and said agent shall also attend at such other places in said settlements as the convenience of such settlers in furnishing their proofs may demand, under the instructions of the General Land Office; and said agent shall, within five months after he shall commence his duties in said State, transmit all the proofs he may take, and make report of his opinion as to each case to said Commissioner of the General Land Office, who shall proceed forthwith to examine and decide said cases: *Provided,* That if any settler does not submit his proof to such agent within four months after reasonable notice, by ad-

Secretary of the Treasury to appoint an agent to proceed to Florida, where the said lands lie, to receive proof in relation to such settlement and occupation.

Said agent to transmit all the proofs taken by him, with his opinion in each case, to the Commissioner of the General Land Office.