

complete navigation without impediment; and if upon reasonable notice to said railroad company to make such changes or improvements the said company fails to do so, the Secretary of War shall have authority to make the same at the expense of said company, and all the rights conferred by this act shall be forfeited; and Congress shall have power to do any and all things necessary to secure the free navigation of the said river; and if said bridge shall not be finished within two years from the passage of this act, the rights and privileges hereby granted shall be null and void.

Approved, March 3, 1887.

CHAP. 359.—An act to provide for the bringing of suits against the Government of the United States.

Mar. 3, 1887.

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 following matters:

Suits against the Government.

First. All claims founded upon the Constitution of the United States or any law of Congress, except for pensions, or upon any regulation of an Executive Department, or upon any contract, expressed or implied, with the Government of the United States, or for damages, liquidated or unliquidated, in cases not sounding in tort, in respect of which claims the party would be entitled to redress against the United States either in a court of law, equity, or admiralty if the United States were suable: *Provided, however,* That nothing in this section shall be construed as giving to either of the courts herein mentioned, jurisdiction to hear and determine claims growing out of the late civil war, and commonly known as "war claims," or to hear and determine other claims, which have heretofore been rejected, or reported on adversely by any court, Department, or commission authorized to hear and determine the same.

Jurisdiction of the Court of Claims.

R. S. sec. 1058, p. 195.

Proviso.

"War" and rejected claims excepted.

Second. All set-offs, counter-claims, claims for damages, whether liquidated or unliquidated, or other demands whatsoever on the part of the Government of the United States against any claimant against the Government in said court: *Provided,* That no suit against the Government of the United States shall be allowed under this act unless the same shall have been brought within six years after the right accrued for which the claim is made.

Set-offs, counter-claims, etc.

Proviso.

Limitation.

SEC. 2. That the district courts of the United States shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the Court of Claims as to all matters named in the preceding section where the amount of the claim does not exceed one thousand dollars, and the circuit courts of the United States shall have such concurrent jurisdiction in all cases where the amount of such claim exceeds one thousand dollars and does not exceed ten thousand dollars. All causes brought and tried under the provisions of this act shall be tried by the court without a jury.

District and circuit courts to have concurrent jurisdiction with Court of Claims; limit.

SEC. 3. That whenever any person shall present his petition to the Court of Claims alleging that he is or has been indebted to the United States as an officer or agent thereof, or by virtue of any contract therewith, or that he is the guarantor, or surety, or personal representative of any officer, or agent, or contractor so indebted, or that he, or the person for whom he is such surety, guarantor, or personal representative has held any office or agency under the United States, or entered into any contract therewith, under which it may be or has been claimed that an indebtedness to the United States has arisen and exists, and that he or the person he represents has applied to the proper Department of the Government requesting that the account of such office, agency, or indebtedness may be adjusted and settled, and that three years have elapsed from the date of such application and said account still remains unsettled and unadjusted, and that no suit upon the same has been brought by the United States, said court shall, due notice first being given to the head of said Department and to the Attorney-General of

Petitions for release from official bond.

the United States, proceed to hear the parties and to ascertain the amount, if any, due the United States on said account. The Attorney-General shall represent the United States at the hearing of said cause. The court may postpone the same from time to time whenever justice shall require. The judgment of said court or of the Supreme Court of the United States, to which an appeal shall lie, as in other cases, as to the amount due, shall be binding and conclusive upon the parties. The payment of such amount so found due by the court shall discharge such obligation. An action shall accrue to the United States against such principal, or surety, or representative to recover the amount so found due, which may be brought at any time within three years after the final judgment of said court. Unless suit shall be brought within said time, such claim and the claim on the original indebtedness shall be forever barred.

Judgment.

Limitation.

Jurisdiction and procedure.

SEC. 4. That the jurisdiction of the respective courts of the United States proceeding under this act, including the right of exception and appeal, shall be governed by the law now in force, in so far as the same is applicable and not inconsistent with the provisions of this act; and the course of procedure shall be in accordance with the established rules of said respective courts, and of such additions and modifications thereof as said courts may adopt.

Petition for settlement of claims.

SEC. 5. That the plaintiff in any suit brought under the provisions of the second section of this act shall file a petition, duly verified with the clerk of the respective court having jurisdiction of the case, and in the district where the plaintiff resides. Such petition shall set forth the full name and residence of the plaintiff, the nature of his claim, and a succinct statement of the facts upon which the claim is based, the money or any other thing claimed, or the damages sought to be recovered and praying the court for a judgment or decree upon the facts and law.

Service.

SEC. 6. That the plaintiff shall cause a copy of his petition filed under the preceding section to be served upon the district attorney of the United States in the district wherein suit is brought, and shall mail a copy of the same, by registered letter, to the Attorney-General of the United States, and shall thereupon cause to be filed with the clerk of the court wherein suit is instituted an affidavit of such service and the mailing of such letter. It shall be the duty of the district attorney upon whom service of petition is made as aforesaid to appear and defend the interests of the Government in the suit, and within sixty days after the service of petition upon him, unless the time should be extended by order of the court made in the case to file a plea, answer, or demurrer on the part of the Government, and to file a notice of any counter-claim, set-off, claim for damages, or other demand or defense whatsoever of the Government in the premises: *Provided*, That should the district attorney neglect or refuse to file the plea, answer, demurrer, or defense, as required, the plaintiff may proceed with the case under such rules as the court may adopt in the premises; but the plaintiff shall not have judgment or decree for his claim, or any part thereof, unless he shall establish the same by proof satisfactory to the court.

Defense.

Proviso.
Proceedings on failure of Government to answer.

Opinions.

SEC. 7. That it shall be the duty of the court to cause a written opinion to be filed in the cause, setting forth the specific findings by the court of the facts therein and the conclusions of the court upon all questions of law involved in the case, and to render judgment thereon. If the suit be in equity or admiralty, the court shall proceed with the same according to the rules of such courts.

Interested parties may testify.

SEC. 8. That in the trial of any suit brought under any of the provisions of this act, no person shall be excluded as a witness because he is a party to or interested in said suit; and any plaintiff or party in interest may be examined as a witness on the part of the Government.

R. S. sec. 1079, p. 199, repealed.

Section ten hundred and seventy-nine of the Revised Statutes is hereby repealed. The provisions of section ten hundred and eighty of the Revised Statutes shall apply to cases under this act.

SEC. 9. That the plaintiff or the United States, in any suit brought under the provisions of this act shall have the same rights of appeal or writ of error as are now reserved in the statutes of the United States in that behalf made, and upon the conditions and limitations therein contained. The modes of procedure in claiming and perfecting an appeal or writ of error shall conform in all respects, and as near as may be, to the statutes and rules of court governing appeals and writs of error in like causes.

Appeals and writs of error.

Procedure.

SEC. 10. That when the findings of fact and the law applicable thereto have been filed in any case as provided in section six of this act, and the judgment or decree is adverse to the Government, it shall be the duty of the district attorney to transmit to the Attorney-General of the United States certified copies of all the papers filed in the cause, with a transcript of the testimony taken, the written findings of the court, and his written opinion as to the same; whereupon the Attorney-General shall determine and direct whether an appeal or writ of error shall be taken or not; and when so directed the district attorney shall cause an appeal or writ of error to be perfected in accordance with the terms of the statutes and rules of practice governing the same: *Provided*, That no appeal or writ of error shall be allowed after six months from the judgment or decree in such suit. From the date of such final judgment or decree interest shall be computed thereon, at the rate of four per centum per annum, until the time when an appropriation is made for the payment of the judgment or decree.

Adverse judgments to United States to be certified to Attorney-General.

Appeal.

Proviso. Limitation. Interest.

SEC. 11. That the Attorney-General shall report to Congress, and at the beginning of each session of Congress, the suits under this act in which a final judgment or decree has been rendered giving the date of each, and a statement of the costs taxed in each case.

Report to Congress.

SEC. 12. That when any claim or matter may be pending in any of the Executive Departments which involves controverted questions of fact or law, the head of such Department, with the consent of the claimant, may transmit the same, with the vouchers, papers, proofs, and documents pertaining thereto, to said Court of Claims, and the same shall be there proceeded in under such rules as the court may adopt. When the facts and conclusions of law shall have been found, the court shall report its findings to the Department by which it was transmitted.

Claims referred by Departments.

SEC. 13. That in every case which shall come before the Court of Claims, or is now pending therein, under the provisions of an act entitled "An act to afford assistance and relief to Congress and the Executive Departments in the investigation of claims and demands against the Government," approved March third, eighteen hundred and eighty-three, if it shall appear to the satisfaction of the court, upon the facts established, that it has jurisdiction to render judgment or decree thereon under existing laws or under the provisions of this act, it shall proceed to do so, giving to either party such further opportunity for hearing as in its judgment justice shall require, and report its proceedings therein to either House of Congress or to the Department by which the same was referred to said court.

Claims referred under "Bowman act." Vol. 22, p. 485.

Judgment.

SEC. 14. That whenever any bill, except for a pension, shall be pending in either House of Congress providing for the payment of a claim against the United States, legal or equitable, or for a grant, gift, or bounty to any person, the House in which such bill is pending may refer the same to the Court of Claims, who shall proceed with the same in accordance with the provisions of the act approved March third, eighteen hundred and eighty-three, entitled an "Act to afford assistance and relief to Congress and the Executive Departments in the investigation of claims and demands against the Government," and report to such House the facts in the case and the amount, where the same can be liquidated, including any facts bearing upon the question whether there has been delay or laches in presenting such claim or applying for such grant, gift, or bounty, and any facts bearing upon the question whether the bar of any statute of limitation should be removed or which shall be

Reference of claims pending in Congress.

Vol. 22, p. 485.

Report to Congress.

claimed to excuse the claimant for not having resorted to any established legal remedy.

Costs.

SEC. 15. If the Government of the United States shall put in issue the right of the plaintiff to recover the court may, in its discretion, allow costs to the prevailing party from the time of joining such issue. Such costs, however, shall include only what is actually incurred for witnesses, and for summoning the same, and fees paid to the clerk of the court.

Inconsistent laws repealed.

SEC. 16. That all laws and parts of laws inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed.

Approved, March 3, 1887.

Mar. 3, 1887.

CHAP. 360.—An act for the repair and preservation of the road, heretofore constructed by the Government, leading from Vicksburg to the national cemetery adjacent thereto.

Vicksburg, Miss.
Appropriation for repairing road to national cemetery.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the sum of ten thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated, to be used in the repair and preservation of the road, heretofore constructed by the United States, leading from the city of Vicksburg to the national cemetery adjacent thereto, the same to be expended by the keeper or person in charge of said cemetery, under the direction of the Secretary of War.

Approved, March 3, 1887.

Mar. 3, 1887.

CHAP. 361.—An act to authorize the Louisiana North and South Railroad Company to construct and maintain a bridge across the Red River in Louisiana.

Louisiana North and South Railroad Company authorized to bridge Red River, at Alexandria, La.

Railway, wagon, and foot bridge.

Provido.
To be a lawful structure and post-route.

Postal telegraph.

Plans, etc., to be approved by Secretary of War.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Louisiana North and South Railroad Company, a corporation created and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Louisiana, be, and is hereby, authorized to construct and maintain a railway and wagon bridge across the Red River at or near the town of Alexandria, Louisiana, at such point as may be selected by the said railroad company for crossing said river with their railroad line, the said bridge to be so constructed as not to interfere with 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, upon which also no higher charge shall be made for the transmission over the same of the mails, the troops, and the munitions of war of the United States, or for through passengers or freight passing over said bridge, than the rate per mile paid for their transportation over the railroads leading to the said bridge; and the United States shall have the right of way for a postal telegraph across said bridge.

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 to secure that object the said company or corporation shall submit to the Secretary of War, for his examination and approval, a design and drawings of the proposed bridge, and a map of the location, giving, for the space of one mile above and one 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