

JOURNAL

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES,

BEING THE

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH CONGRESS,

BEGUN AND HELD

AT THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

DECEMBER 2, 1895,

IN THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH YEAR OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.



WASHINGTON:

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

1896.

83.290.

S. 2859. An act changing the time for holding circuit court of the United States at Hartford, in the district of Connecticut;

S. 2978. An act to provide an American register for the steamer *Menemsha*;

H. R. 9253. An act to amend an act approved August 19, 1890, entitled "An act to adopt regulations for preventing collisions at sea;"

S. 1306. An act to authorize and encourage the holding of a transmississippi and international exposition at the city of Omaha, in the State of Nebraska, in the year 1898;

S. 2412. An act to make the city of Santa Barbara, county of Santa Barbara, State of California, a suburb of entry;

H. R. 180. An act to make the city of Erie, Pa., a port of immediate transportation;

S. 1767. An act to provide subports of entry and delivery in the State of Florida;

S. 3206. An act to grant a right of way through the new Fort Bliss Military Reservation to the El Paso and Northeastern Railroad Company;

S. R. 161. Joint resolution authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to place a bronze tablet or inscription on the Government building erected in Detroit, Mich.;

S. 768. An act for the relief of James A. Moore;

S. 2783. An act to establish a life-saving station on the coast of New Hampshire or Massachusetts, between the Hampton and Merrimac rivers;

S. R. 27. Joint resolution granting permission for the erection of a monument in Washington, D. C., for the ornamentation of the national capital and in honor of Samuel Hahnemann;

S. 2490. An act to authorize the Secretary of War to improve and maintain the public roads within the limits of the national park at Gettysburg, Pa.;

S. R. 138. Joint resolution for the relief of James P. Veach;

S. 3170. An act to authorize the Butler and Pittsburg Railroad Company to construct and maintain a bridge across the Allegheny River;

S. 2943. An act to authorize the construction of a bridge across the Warrior River by the Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company;

S. 261. An act for the relief of Arthur P. Selby;

S. 2945. An act to authorize the construction of a bridge across the Alabama River by the Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company;

S. R. 149. Joint resolution extending the benefits of sections 1426 and 1573 of the Revised Statutes to all enlisted persons of the Navy;

S. 1011. An act for the relief of Capt. James Reagan, United States Army;

S. 2944. An act to authorize the construction of a bridge across the Cahaba River, in Bibb County, Alabama, by the Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company;

H. R. 9409. An act making appropriations to supply deficiencies in the appropriations for expenses of the House of Representatives, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year 1896;

H. R. 7338. An act for the relief of William H. Scofield, Jacob Brady, James Ketcham, Annie Booth, as administratrix of the goods, chattels, and credits of George W. Booth, deceased; Wilson P. Billar, Ezra L. Waterhouse, Moses C. Bell, George W. Byles, and George A. Scofield;

H. R. 9226. An act to change the time and places for the district and circuit courts of the northern district of Texas; and

S. 1853. An act for the relief of Edward Rice.

On motion of Mr. Dingley, at 7 o'clock and 30 minutes p. m., the House took a recess until 9 o'clock and 30 minutes p. m.

AFTER THE RECESS.

Mr. Crowther, from the Committee on Enrolled Bills, reported that the committee had examined and found truly enrolled bills and a joint resolution of the following titles; which were thereupon signed by the Speaker, to wit:

H. Res. 201. A joint resolution extending the time of payments due from settlers and purchasers on all ceded Indian reservations;

H. R. 9447. An act to amend section 1 of the act to amend an act entitled "An act authorizing the Postmaster-General to adjust certain claims of postmasters for loss by burglary, fire, or other unavoidable casualty," approved May 9, 1888;

H. R. 3990. An act granting a pension to Mrs. Eliza G. Pyne;

H. R. 4580. An act to amend section 3449 of the Revised Statutes;

H. R. 8321. An act to authorize the county of St. Louis, in the State of Minnesota, to build or authorize the building of a foot and wagon bridge across the St. Louis River, between Minnesota and Wisconsin, at a point near Fond du Lac, in said State of Minnesota; and

H. R. 7664. An act making appropriations for sundry civil expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1897, and for other purposes.

A further message from the Senate, by Mr. Platt, one of its secretaries, announced that the Senate had passed bills and a joint resolution of the following titles, in which the concurrence of the House was requested:

S. 2775. An act to authorize the Herndon and Aldie Railroad to construct a bridge over the Potomac River at or near the Great Falls;

S. 2630. An act authorizing and directing the Secretary of the

Navy to donate condemned cannon to the Londonderry Soldiers' Monument Association, of Londonderry, N. H.;

S. 2483. An act donating condemned cannon and cannon balls to the New Hampshire Soldiers' Home;

S. 810. An act to amend the act entitled "An act granting pensions to the soldiers and sailors of the Mexican war, and for other purposes," approved January 29, 1887; and

S. R. 89. Joint resolution authorizing and directing the Secretary of the Navy to appoint a board of three officers of the Navy to proceed to Navassa Island and Swamm Island, in the West Indies, and examine and report upon the practicability and advisability of establishing a coaling station for the United States Government on either of said islands.

NOTE.—This message is a part of the proceedings found on page 535. The Speaker laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read, and, with the accompanying bill, was referred to the Committee on the Public Lands:

To the House of Representatives:

I herewith return, without approval, House bill No. 4804, entitled "An act to amend subdivision 10 of section 2238 of the Revised Statutes of the United States."

The subdivision of the section of the law proposed to be amended by this bill has reference to the fees allowed receivers and registers at public land offices. This subdivision now reads as follows:

"Tenth. Registers and receivers are allowed jointly, at the rate of 15 cents per hundred words, for testimony reduced by them to writing for claimants, in establishing preemption and homestead rights."

The bill under consideration so amends this subdivision that in the first clause a compensation of 10 cents per hundred words is allowed to the registers and receivers for reducing to writing the testimony of claimants "in all cases," instead of 15 cents per hundred words for reducing to writing testimony "in establishing preemption and homestead rights," as provided in the old law.

Whether this reduction of fees preserves an adequate and just compensation to the offices affected I suppose has been duly considered by the Congress.

The bill, however, after providing for this change in compensation, contains the following words: "And in all cases where they (the registers and receivers) can secure a competent person to reduce the testimony to writing for a sum less per folio than the sum herein prescribed, it shall be their duty to do so."

By the addition of these words the bill seems to give certain fees by way of official compensation to the officers named for certain services to be performed by them, and at the same time to provide that if they can secure other persons willing to perform these services for a less sum than the amount allowed to them, they shall forego their fees in favor of such persons.

It is very important that the fees and perquisites of public officers should be definitely and clearly fixed, so that the official may know precisely the items of his lawful compensation and the people be protected from extortion and imposition.

A public officer ought not to be expected to search very industriously for a person to underbid him for official work; and if such a person appeared, the temptation to combination and conspiracy would in many cases lead to abuse.

It will be observed that the officers are not given, by this amendment, the option to do this work themselves at 10 cents per folio, or secure a competent person to do it at a less rate; nor, if they desire, are they allowed to compete with those willing to accept a less compensation. They may charge a fixed rate for the service if performed by them, but in any event, if they can procure another party to perform the services for a less sum, they must do so.

I am convinced that this bill in its present form, perhaps through unfortunate phraseology, if it became a law, would lead to confusion and uncertainty, and would invite practices against which the public service ought to be carefully guarded.

GROVER CLEVELAND.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, May 23, 1896.

NOTE.—This message is a part of the proceedings on page 601 (see note).

A message from the Senate, by Mr. Platt, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed bills of the following titles, in which the concurrence of the House was requested:

S. 525. An act for the relief of Thomas Guineau, of Oregon;

S. 2054. An act for the relief of Rinaldo P. Smith, of Baltimore, Md.; and

S. 2840. An act to incorporate the East Washington Heights Traction Railway Company, of the District of Columbia.

A further message from the Senate, by Mr. Platt, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate had passed, without amendment, the bill (H. R. 9253) to amend an act approved August 19, 1890, entitled "An act to adopt regulations for preventing collisions at sea."

The message also announced that the Senate had passed resolutions of the following titles, in which the concurrence of the House was requested.