

United States as not being in fact swamp and overflowed lands; and it shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Interior to make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this act: *Provided*, That nothing herein contained shall prejudice the rights of any person who may have made actual settlement upon such lands under the preëmption or homestead laws prior to the passage of this act.

Approved, February 23, 1875.

CHAP. 103.—An act to provide for settlements with certain railway companies.

Feb. 27, 1875.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War and Attorney-General are hereby authorized and empowered jointly to adjust and settle the claims of the United States against

Adjustment and settlement of claims of United States against certain railroads.

- The Alexandria, Loudon and Hampshire,
- The Edgefield and Kentucky,
- The Knoxville and Kentucky,
- The McMinnville and Manchester,
- The Mobile and Ohio,
- The Memphis, Clarksville and Louisville,
- The Memphis and Little Rock,
- The Nashville and Northwestern,
- The Southwestern Branch Railroad of Missouri, and

The Selma, Rome and Dalton Railroad Companies, and all persons and corporations having any interest in the subject growing out of the sale and transfer by the United States of any rights or property to said railway companies above named, respectively, in the years eighteen hundred and sixty-five and eighteen hundred and sixty-six, or both, by making such abatement in the amount of such claims, respectively, as shall be deemed just, in respect of an overvaluation, if any, of the property sold, not exceeding twenty-five per centum of the valuation of the property in each case, as made under the authority of the War Department on the occasion of such sales: *Provided*, That such settlements shall be made within one year next after the passage of this act; and that good and sufficient security be given to the United States by or on behalf of the parties in interest, respectively, who do not pay in cash at the time of settlement, for the payment, with interest, of such sums as shall, on such settlements, be so found due, at such times within ten years as may be agreed upon.

Limit of time for settlement.

Security for payments.

SEC. 2. That this act shall not be construed so as to produce or authorize any delay in the prosecution of said claims respectively other than as aforesaid; and each of said claims not so settled and disposed of as aforesaid shall be prosecuted and enforced according to existing obligations. In such settlements no allowance shall be made in respect of any matter occurring prior to such sales and transfers, nor otherwise, except such payments as may have been made in cash, and such credits for transportation as the general course of the business regulations of the Departments authorizes. And in any such settlements, the said Secretary and Attorney-General shall, as a condition thereof, take a full release from the other parties, respectively, of all claims and demands of every name and nature theretofore existing, if any such there be, against the United States.

Prosecution of claims not to be delayed.

What allowances to be made.

Release of claims against United States.

Approved, February 27, 1875.

CHAP. 114.—An act to protect all citizens in their civil and legal rights.

March 1, 1875.

Whereas, it is essential to just government we recognize the equality of all men before the law, and hold that it is the duty of government in its dealings with the people to mete out equal and exact justice to all, of whatever nativity, race, color, or persuasion, religious or political; and it being the appropriate object of legislation to enact great fundamental principles into law: Therefore,