and be completed within three years from same date, the rights and
privileges hereby granted shall cease and be determined.

Approved, March 1, 1900.

CHAP. 30.—An Act To authorize the Natchitoches Railway and Construction
Company to build and maintain a railway and traffic bridge across Red River at
Grand Écore, in the parish of Natchitoches, State of Louisiana.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United
States of America in Congress assembled, That the Natchitoches Rail-
way and Construction Company, a corporation duly incorporated and
existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Louisiana, be,
and is hereby, authorized to construct and maintain, by itself or
through its assignees, a railway and traffic bridge across Red River at
a point suitable to the interest of navigation, at Grand Écore, parish
of Natchitoches, State of Louisiana. Said bridge shall be constructed
to provide for passage of railway trains, and for all legitimate traffic of
foot, horse, vehicle, animal, and all other legitimate purposes, and for
transmission of the mails, at such legal rates of toll as may be fixed by
said railway company or its transferees and approved by the Secretary
of War, except to the people of the parish of Natchitoches, to whom
the use of said bridge shall at all times and under all circumstances be
free.

SEC. 2. That said bridge, built under this Act and subject to its
limitations, shall be a lawful structure, and shall be recognized and
known as a post route, upon which also no higher charge shall be
made for the transmission over the same of the mails, the troops, and
munitions of war of the United States than the rate per mile paid for
the transportation over the railroad or public highways leading to the
said bridge, and shall enjoy the rights and privileges of other post
roads in the United States; and equal privileges in the use of said
bridge shall be granted to all telegraph and telephone companies; and
the United States shall have the right of way across said bridge and
its approaches for postal telegraph purposes: Provided, That the
bridge herein authorized to be constructed shall be so kept and man-
aged by the company owning or operating it as to afford proper ways
and means for the passage through or under it of vessels, barges, or
rafts at all times, both by day and by night. And if said bridge be
constructed as a drawbridge, the draw shall be opened promptly upon
reasonable signal for the passage of boats; and upon whatever kind
of bridge is built there shall be displayed, from sunset to sunrise, at
the expense of said company, such lights and signals as the Light-
House Board shall prescribe.

SEC. 3. That if said bridge, erected and maintained under the
authority of this Act, shall at any time substantially or materially
obstruct the free navigation of said river, or shall, in the opinion of
the Secretary of War, obstruct such navigation, he is hereby author-
ized to cause such change or alteration of said bridge to be made as
will effectually obviate such obstruction; and such alteration shall be
made and all such obstructions be removed at the expense of the owner
or operators of said bridge; and in case of any litigation arising from
the obstruction or alleged obstruction to the free navigation of said
river, the case may be brought in the district court of the United
States for the western district of Louisiana: Provided, That nothing
in this Act shall be so construed as to repeal or modify any of the pro-
visions of law now existing in reference to the protection of the naviga-
tion of rivers, or to exempt said bridge from the operation of same.

SEC. 4. That all railroad companies desiring to use the said bridge
shall have and be entitled to equal rights and privileges relative to the
passage of railway trains over the same and the approaches thereto upon the payment of a reasonable compensation for such use, which compensation may be different in case of different railways. In case of disagreement as to compensation for the use of said bridge, the difference shall be determined by the Secretary of War upon hearing the allegations and proof of the parties in interest.

SEC. 5. That the bridge authorized to be constructed under this Act shall be built and located under and subject to such regulations for the security of 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 said bridge, and a map of the location, prepared with reference to known datum plane upon prescribed scale, furnished by the engineer officer having supervision of said river, and giving, for the space of two miles above and two miles below the proposed location of the bridge, the topography of the banks of the river, with shore lines at high and low water, the direction and strength of the currents at all stages, and the soundings accurately showing the bed of the stream, the location of any other bridge or bridges, and shall furnish such other information as may be required for a full and satisfactory understanding of the subject. And until the said plans and location of the bridge are approved by the Secretary of War the bridge shall not be built; and should any change be made in the plan of the said bridge during the process of construction such change shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary of War, and said structure shall be changed at the costs and expense of the owners thereof from time to time, as the Secretary of War may direct, so as to preserve the free and convenient navigation of said river.

SEC. 6. That this Act shall be null and void if actual construction of the bridge herein authorized be not commenced within one year, and completed within three years from the date hereof.

SEC. 7. That the right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act is hereby expressly reserved.

Approved, March 1, 1900.