

equity in partition proceedings between private persons. Whenever in such suit the court shall order a sale of the property or any part thereof the Attorney-General of the United States may, in his discretion, bid for the same in behalf of the United States. If the United States shall be the purchaser, the amount of the purchase money shall be paid from the Treasury of the United States upon a warrant drawn by the Secretary of the Treasury on the requisition of the Attorney-General.

Sale of property.
—bid by the United States.

Approved, May 17, 1898.

CHAP. 340.—An Act Declaring the Federal jail at the city of Fort Smith, Arkansas, a national prison for certain purposes.

May 17, 1898.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Federal jail at the city of Fort Smith, Arkansas, in addition to the purposes for which it is now used, is hereby declared to be a national prison, for the confinement of persons convicted of crimes and misdemeanors in the United States courts and commissioners' courts in the Indian Territory, in cases where the term of imprisonment does not exceed one year, admission into said prison to be under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Attorney-General of the United States. And said jail may also be used for the care and confinement of United States prisoners in the Texarkana division of the western district of Arkansas.

Fort Smith, Ark.
Federal jail declared a national prison.

—admission into.

—additional use.

Approved, May 17, 1898.

CHAP. 341.—An Act To provide for the disposition of abandoned imported merchandise.

May 17, 1898.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section twenty-three of the Act of June tenth, eighteen hundred and ninety, is hereby amended so as to read as follows:

Customs.
Abandoned imported merchandise.
Vol. 26, p. 140.

“SEC. 23. That no allowance for damage to goods, wares, and merchandise imported into the United States shall hereafter be made in the estimation and liquidation of duties thereon; but the importer thereof may, within ten days after entry, abandon to the United States all or any portion of goods, wares, and merchandise included in any invoice, and be relieved from the payment of the duties on the portion so abandoned: *Provided,* That the portion so abandoned shall amount to ten per centum or over of the total value or quantity of the invoice; and the property so abandoned shall be sold by public auction or otherwise disposed of for the account and credit of the United States under such regulations as the Secretary of the Treasury may prescribe. All merchandise so abandoned by the importer thereof shall be delivered by such importer at such place within the port of arrival as the chief officer of customs may direct, and on the failure of the importer to comply with the directions of the collector in this respect the abandoned merchandise shall be disposed of by the collector at the expense of such importer.”

No allowance for damage.

—abandonment and relief.

Proviso.
Value of abandoned goods.

—sale.

—place of delivery by importer.

—failure to deliver.

Approved, May 17, 1898.

CHAP. 342.—An Act To organize a volunteer signal corps.

May 18, 1898.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President is hereby authorized to organize a volunteer signal corps, for service during the existing war, which corps shall receive the same pay and allowances as are authorized by law for the Signal Corps of the Army.

Army.
Volunteer signal corps.

—pay.

—organization.

Proviso.
Electricians and
telegraph operators.

SEC. 2. The volunteer signal corps shall consist of one colonel, one lieutenant-colonel, one major as disbursing officer, and such other officers and men as may be required, not exceeding one major for each army corps, and two captains, two first lieutenants, two second lieutenants, five first-class sergeants, ten sergeants, ten corporals, and thirty first-class privates to each organized division of troops: *Provided*, That two-thirds of all officers below the rank of major and a like proportion of the enlisted men shall be skilled electricians or telegraph operators.

Approved, May 18, 1898.

May 18, 1898.

CHAP. 343.—An Act Granting the Santa Fe and Grand Canyon Railroad Company right of way for railroad purposes through the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve in northern Arizona.

Santa Fe and
Grand Canyon Rail-
road granted right of
way through Grand
Canyon Forest Re-
serve.

Vol. 27, p. 1064.

Location.

Restrictions, etc.
Chap. 152, vol. 18, p.
482, made applicable.

Proviso.
Timber.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Santa Fe and Grand Canyon Railroad Company, a corporation created and existing under the laws of the Territory of Arizona, is authorized to construct and maintain a railroad over and through the Grand Canyon Forest Reserve (heretofore reserved from entry or settlement and set apart as a public reservation by Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States, by proclamation of date the twentieth day of February, eighteen hundred and ninety-three), said railroad to enter the said Grand Canyon Forest Reserve at such a point on the southern boundary of said reserve in Coconino County, Arizona, as may be found to be the most feasible for the route of said railroad, running in a northerly direction from Williams, Arizona; thence proceeding by the most practicable route through a point at or near Lombard and the Bright Angel Trail to the Indian Gardens, and from said Bright Angel Trail in an easterly direction to the Little Colorado River; also to proceed by such side tracks, extensions, switches, and spurs as may be necessary to reach the various groups of mines in said forest reserve, all in said Coconino County; said right of way being granted subject to the rules and restrictions and carrying all the rights and privileges of an Act entitled "An Act granting to railroads the right of way through the public lands of the United States," approved March third, eighteen hundred and seventy-five, said Act being hereby made applicable to the right of way hereby granted: *Provided*, That no timber shall be cut by said railroad company for any purpose outside of the rights of way herein granted.

Approved, May 18, 1898.

May 18, 1898.

CHAP. 344.—An Act To abolish the distinction between offered and unoffered lands, and for other purposes.

Public lands.
Distinction between
offered and unoffered
lands abolished.

Vol. 20, p. 89.

Vol. 27, p. 348.

Missouri.
Sale of lands offered
or otherwise author-
ized.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in cases arising from and after the passage of this Act the distinction now obtaining in the statutes between offered and unoffered lands shall no longer be made in passing upon subsisting preemption claims, in disposing of the public lands under the homestead laws, and under the timber and stone law of June third, eighteen hundred and seventy-eight, as extended by the Act of August fourth, eighteen hundred and ninety-two, but in all such cases hereafter arising the land in question shall be treated as unoffered, without regard to whether it may have actually been at some time offered or not.

SEC. 2. That all public lands within the State of Missouri shall hereafter be subject to disposal at private sale in the manner now provided by law for the sale of lands which have been publicly offered for sale,