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contract shall be made and concluded, the difference between the accepted bid of the failing bidders and the amount payable under the contract for the service of two years shall be forthwith charged against the failing bidder or bidders; and an action for such sum in the nature of liquidated damages shall accrue to the United States for the use of the Postoffice Department immediately upon the execution of the final contract. And both causes of action mentioned in this section may be joined in one suit.

SEC. 252. That no bidder for carrying the mails shall be released from his obligation under his bid or proposal, notwithstanding an award made to a lower bidder, until a contract for the designated service shall have been duly executed by such lower bidder and his sureties, and accepted, and the service entered upon by the contractor to the satisfaction of the Postmaster General.

SEC. 253. That hereafter all bidders upon every mail route for the transportation of the mails upon the same, where the annual compensation for the service on such route at the time exceeds the sum of five thousand dollars, shall accompany their bids with a certified check or draft, payable to the order of the Postmaster General upon some solvent national bank, which check or draft shall not be less than five per centum on the amount of the annual pay on said route at the time such bid is made; and in case of new service, not less than five per centum of the amount of one year's pay proposed in such bid, if the bid exceed five thousand dollars per annum. In case any bidder, on being awarded any such contract, shall fail to execute the same, with good and sufficient sureties, according to the terms on which such bid was made and accepted, and enter upon the performance of the service to the satisfaction of the Postmaster General, such bidder shall forfeit the amount so deposited to the United States, and the same shall forthwith be paid into the treasury for the use of the Postoffice Department; but if such contract shall be duly executed and the service entered upon as aforesaid, such draft or check so deposited shall be returned to the bidder.

SEC. 254. That any person or persons bidding for the transportation of the mails upon any route which may be advertised to be let, and receiving an award of the contract for such service, who shall wrongfully refuse or fail to enter into contract with the Postmaster General in due form, and perform the service described in his or their bid or proposal, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, be punished by a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars and by imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months.

SEC. 255. That the Postmaster General, whenever he may deem it consistent with the public interest, may accept new surety upon any contract existing or hereafter made for carrying the mails, in substitution for and release of any existing surety.

SEC. 256. That no contract for carrying the mail shall be made for a longer term than four years, and no contract for carrying the mail on the sea shall be made for a longer term than two years.

SEC. 257. That whenever, by reason of any error, omission, or other cause, any route which should properly be advertised for the regular letting is omitted, it shall be the duty of the Postmaster General to advertise the same as soon as the error or omission shall be discovered, and the proposals for such route shall be opened as soon as possible after the other proposals in the same contract section; and the contract made under such supplementary advertisement shall run, as nearly as possible, from the beginning to the end of the regular contract term, and, during the time necessarily lost by reason of such error, omission, or other cause, the Postmaster General shall provide for the carrying of the mail on such route at as low rate as possible, without advertising.

SEC. 258. That whenever it becomes necessary to change the terms of an existing contract for carrying the mail otherwise than as provided in sections two hundred and sixty and two hundred and sixty-one, notice thereof shall be given and proceedings had thereon the same as at the letting of original contracts.

SEC. 259. That no person whose bid for carrying the mail is accepted shall receive any pay until he has executed his contract according to law and the regulations of the Department.

SEC. 260. That compensation for additional service in carrying the mail shall not be in excess of the exact proportion which the original compensation bears to the original service; and when any such additional service is ordered, the sum to be allowed therefor shall be expressed in the order, and entered upon the books of the Department; and no compensation shall be paid for any additional regular service rendered before the issuing of such order.

SEC. 261. That no extra allowance shall be made for any increase of expedition in carrying the mail unless thereby the employment of additional stock and carriers is made necessary, and in such case the additional compensation shall bear no greater proportion to the additional stock and carriers necessarily employed than the compensation in the original contract bears to the stock and carriers necessarily employed in its execution.

SEC. 262. That the Postmaster General shall deliver to the Auditor for the Postoffice Department, within sixty days after the making of any contract for carrying the mail, a duplicate copy thereof.

SEC. 263. That the Postmaster General, after advertising for proposals, may enter into contracts or make suitable arrangements for transporting the mail through any foreign country, between any two points in the United States, and such transportation shall be by the speediest, safest, and most economical route; and all contracts therefor may be revoked whenever any new road or canal shall be opened, affording a speedier, more economical, and equally safe transportation between the same points; but in case of the revocation of any such contract, a fair indemnity shall be awarded to the contractor.

SEC. 264. That the Postmaster General may contract with the owner or master of any steamboat plying upon the waters of the United States, or of any steamship or other vessel plying between ports of the United States, for carrying the mail for any length of time less than four years, and without advertising for proposals therefor, whenever the public interest and convenience will thereby be promoted; but the price paid for such service shall in no case be greater than the average price paid under the last preceding or then existing regular contract on the same route.

SEC. 265. That the Postmaster General may enter into contracts for carrying the mail, with railway companies, without advertising for bids therefor; and the Postmaster General may allow any railroad company with whom he may contract for the carrying of the United States mail, and who furnish railway postoffice cars for the transportation of the mail, such additional compensation beyond that now allowed by law as he may think fit, not exceeding, however, fifty per centum of the said rates.

SEC. 266. That the Postmaster General may make deductions from the pay of contractors, for failures to perform service according to contract, and impose fines upon them for other delinquencies. He may deduct the price of the trip in all cases where the trip is not performed; and not exceeding three times the price if the failure be occasioned by the fault of the contractor or carrier.

SEC. 267. That the Postmaster General may, after advertising for proposals, enter into contracts for the transportation of the mail between the United States and any foreign country whenever the public interests will thereby be promoted.

SEC. 268. That the mail between the United States and any foreign port, or between ports of the United States touching at a foreign port, shall be transported in steamships; but the Postmaster General may have such transportation performed by sailing vessels when the service can be facilitated thereby.

SEC. 269. That for transporting the mail between the United States and any foreign port, or between ports of the United States touching at a foreign port, the Postmaster General may allow as compensation, if by a United States steamship, any sum not exceeding the sea and United States inland postage, and, if by a foreign steamship or by a sailing vessel, any sum not exceeding the sea postage, on the mail so transported.

SEC. 270. That the Postmaster General may impose fines on contractors for transporting the mail between the United States and any foreign country, for any unreasonable or unnecessary delay in the departure of such mail, or the performance of the trip; but the fine for any one default shall not exceed one-half the contract price for the trip.

SEC. 271. That no contractor for transporting the mail within or between the United States and any foreign country shall assign or transfer his contract, and all such assignments or transfers shall be null and void.

SEC. 272. That every contract for transporting the mail between the United States and any foreign country shall contain, besides the usual stipulation for the right of the Postmaster General to discontinue the same, the further stipulation that it may be terminated by Congress.

SEC. 273. That the Postmaster General may, by and with the advice and consent of the President, make any arrangements which may be deemed just and expedient for allowing the mails of Canada, or any other country adjoining the United States, to be transported over the territory of the United States from one point in such country to any other point in the same, at the expense of the country to which the mail belongs, upon obtaining a like privilege for the transportation of the United States mail through the country to which the privilege is granted; but such privilege may at any time be annulled by the President or Congress from and after one month succeeding the day on which notice of the act of the President or Congress is given to the chief executive or head of the postoffice department of the country whose privilege is to be annulled.

SEC. 274. That every foreign mail shall, while being transported across the territory of the United States under the provisions of the preceding section, be deemed and taken to be a mail of the United States, so far as to make any violation thereof, or depredation thereon, or offense in respect thereto, or any part thereof, an offense of the same grade, and punishable in the same manner and to the same extent as though the said mail was a mail of the United States; and in any indictment for any such offense, the said mail, or any part thereof, may be alleged to be, and on the trial of any such indictment it shall be deemed and held to be a mail or part of a mail of the United States.

SEC. 275. That the Postmaster General or the Secretary of State is hereby authorized to empower the consuls of the United States to pay the foreign postage on such letters destined for the United States as may be detained at the ports of foreign countries for the non-payment of postage, which postage shall be by the consul marked as paid by him, and the amount thereof shall be collected in the United States as other postage, on the delivery of the letters, and repaid to said consul, or credited on his account at the State Department.

SEC. 276. That the Postmaster General, under the direction of the President of the United States, is hereby authorized and empowered to charge upon, and collect from, all letters and other mailable matter carried to or from any port of the United States, in any foreign packet ship or other vessel, the same rate or rates of charge for American postage which the government to which such foreign packet or other vessel belongs imposes upon letters and other mailable matter conveyed to or from such foreign country in American packets or other vessels as the postage of such government, and at any time to revoke the same; and it shall be the duty of all custom-house officers and other United States agents designated or appointed for that purpose to enforce or carry into effect the foregoing provision, and to aid or assist in the collection of such postage; and to that end it shall be lawful for such officers and agents, on suspicion of fraud, to open and examine, in the presence of two or more respectable persons, being citizens of the United States, any package or packages supposed to contain mailable matter found on board such packets or other vessels or elsewhere, and to prevent, if necessary, such packets or other vessels from entering, breaking bulk, or making clearance until such letters or other mailable matter are duly delivered into the United States postoffice.

SEC. 277. That all letters or other mailable matter conveyed to or from any part of the United States by any foreign packet or ship, except such sealed letters relating to said ship or vessel, or any part of the cargo thereof as may be directed to the owner or owners, consignee or consignees, of said ship or other vessel, shall be so subject to postage charge as aforesaid, whether addressed to any person in the United States or elsewhere, provided it is done by the packet or other ship of a foreign country imposing postage on letters or mailable matter conveyed to or from such country by any packet or other ship of the United States; and such letters or other mailable matter carried in foreign packet-ships or other vessels, except such unsealed letters relating to the ship or vessel, or any part of the cargo thereof, as may be directed to the owner or owners, consignee or consignees, as aforesaid, are hereby required to be delivered into the United States postoffice by the master or commanders of all such packets or other vessels when arriving, and to be taken from a United States postoffice when departing, and the postage paid thereon justly chargeable by this act; and for refusing or failing to do so, or for conveying said letters or any letters intended to be conveyed in any ship or vessel of such foreign country over or across the United States, or any portion thereof, the party offending shall, on conviction, forfeit and pay not exceeding one thousand dollars for each offense.

SEC. 278. That any person who shall willfully or maliciously injure, deface or destroy any mail matter, deposited in any letter box, pillar box or other receptacle established by authority of the Postmaster General for the safe deposit of matter for the mail or for delivery, or who shall willfully aid or assist in injuring such mail matter, shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, forfeit and pay not more than five hundred dollars, or be imprisoned not more than three years, at the discretion of the court.

SEC. 279. That any person employed in any department of the postal service who shall secrete, embezzle, or destroy any letter, packet, bag, or mail of letters intrusted to him, or which shall come into his possession, and which was intended to be conveyed by mail or carried or delivered by any mail carrier, mail messenger, route agent, letter carrier, or other person employed in any department of the postal service, or forwarded through or delivered from any postoffice or branch postoffice established by authority of the Postmaster General, and which shall contain any note, bond, draft, check, warrant, revenue stamp, postage stamp, stamped envelope, postal card, money order, certificate of stock, or other pecuniary obligation or security of the government, or of any officer or fiscal agent thereof, of any description whatever; any bank note, bank post bill, bill of exchange, or note of assignment of stock in the funds; any letter of attorney for receiving annuities or dividends, selling stock in the funds, or collecting the interest thereof; any letter of credit, note, bond, warrant, draft, bill, promissory note, covenant, contract, or agreement whatsoever for or relating to the payment of money or the delivery of any article of value, or the performance of any act, matter, or thing; any receipt, release, acquittance, or discharge of or from any debt, covenant, or demand, or any part thereof; any copy of the record of any judgment or decree in any court of law or chancery, or any execution which may have issued thereon; any copy of any other record, or any other article of value or writing representing the same; any person who shall, by fraud or deception, obtain from any person having custody thereof, any such mail, letter or packet containing any such article of value aforesaid, every such person, not being employed in any department of the postal service, shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, be imprisoned at hard labor not less than one nor more than five years.

SEC. 282. That any person who shall be accessory after the fact to the offense of stealing or taking any letter, postal card, or other mail matter, or any inclosure therein, or to any other offense against the postal laws, shall, on conviction thereof, forfeit and pay not exceeding one thousand dollars, and be imprisoned not exceeding five years; and any such accessory after the fact may be tried, convicted, and punished in the district in which his offense was committed, though the principal offense may have been committed in another district; and such trial, conviction and punishment may be before that of the principal offender, when such principal offender has fled from justice or can not be arrested to be put on trial.

SEC. 283. That any person who shall buy, receive or conceal, or aid in buying, receiving or concealing any note, bond, draft, check, warrant, revenue stamp, postage stamp, stamped envelope, postal card, money order, certificate of stock, or other pecuniary obligation or security of the government, or of any officer or fiscal agent thereof, of any description whatever; any bank note, bank post bill, bill of exchange, or note of assignment of stock in the funds; any letter of attorney for receiving annuities or dividends, selling stock in the funds, or collecting the interest thereof; any letter of credit, note, bond, warrant, draft, bill, promissory note, covenant, contract, or agreement whatsoever for or relating to the payment or the delivery of any article of value, or the performance of any act, matter, or thing; any receipt, release, acquittance, or discharge of or from any debt, covenant, or demand, or any part thereof; any copy of the record of any judgment or decree in any court of law or chancery, or any execution which may have issued thereon; any copy of any other record, or any other article of value or writing representing the same, knowing any such article or thing to have been stolen or embezzled from the mail, or out of any postoffice, branch postoffice, or other authorized depository for mail matter, or from any person having custody thereof, every such person shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, forfeit and pay not exceeding two thousand dollars, and be imprisoned at hard labor not exceeding ten years; and such accessory after the fact may be tried, convicted, and punished without the principal offender being first tried, when said principal offender has fled from justice, or can not be found to be put on trial.

SEC. 284. That any person employed in any department of the postal service who shall improperly detain, delay, embezzle or destroy any newspaper, or permit any other person to detain, delay, embezzle or destroy the same, or open, or permit any other person to open, any mail or package of newspapers not directed to the office where he is employed, shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, forfeit and pay not exceeding fifty dollars. And if any other person shall open, embezzle or destroy any mail or package of newspapers not being directed to him, and not being authorized to open or receive the same, every such person shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, forfeit and pay not exceeding twenty dollars. And any person who shall take or steal any mail or package of newspapers from any postoffice, or from any person having custody thereof, every such person shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, be imprisoned at hard labor not exceeding three months.

SEC. 285. That any person who shall rob any carrier, agent, or other person intrusted with the mail, of such mail, or any part thereof, shall, on conviction thereof, be imprisoned at hard labor not less than five nor more than ten years; and if convicted a second time of a like offense, or if, in effecting such robbery the first time, the robber shall wound the person having custody of the mail, or put his life in jeopardy by the use of dangerous weapons, such offender shall be imprisoned at hard labor, for the term of his natural life.

SEC. 286. That any person who shall be accessory after the fact to any robbery of the carrier, agent, or other person intrusted with the mail, of such mail, or any part thereof, shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, forfeit and pay not exceeding two thousand dollars, and be imprisoned at hard labor not exceeding ten years; and such accessory after the fact may be tried, convicted, and punished without the principal offender being first tried, when said principal offender has fled from justice, or can not be found to be put on trial.

SEC. 287. That any person who shall attempt to rob the mail by assaulting the person having custody thereof, shooting at him or his horse, or threatening him with dangerous weapons, and shall not effect such robbery, shall, on conviction thereof, be imprisoned at hard labor not less than two nor more than ten years.

SEC. 288. That any person who shall have taken charge of the mail and shall voluntarily quit or desert the same before he has delivered it into the postoffice at the termination of the route, or to some known mail carrier, messenger, agent or other employe of the Postoffice Department authorized to receive the same, shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, forfeit and pay not exceeding five hundred dollars, and be imprisoned not less than three months nor more than one year.

SEC. 289. That all laws defining punishment for depredations committed upon the mail shall extend to and have full force in the Indian country.

SEC. 290. That any person who shall steal, purloin or embezzle any mail bag or other property in use by or belonging to the Postoffice Department, or who shall, for any lucre, gain or convenience, appropriate any such property to his own or any other than its proper use, or who shall, for any lucre or gain, convey away any such property to the hinderance or detriment of the public service; every such person, his aiders, abettors and counselors, shall, if the value of the property be twenty-five dollars or more, be deemed guilty of felony, and, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, shall be imprisoned not exceeding three years; and if the value of the property be less than twenty-five dollars, the party offending shall be imprisoned not more than one year, or be fined not less than ten nor more than two hundred dollars.

SEC. 291. That any person who shall tear, cut, or otherwise injure any mail bag, pouch, or other thing used or designed for use in the conveyance of the mail, or who shall draw or break any staple, or loosen any part of any lock, chain, or strap attached thereto, with intent to rob or steal any such mail, or to render the same insecure, shall, on conviction thereof, for every such offense, forfeit and pay not less than one hundred nor more than five hundred dollars, or be imprisoned at hard labor not less than one nor more than three years, at the discretion of the court.

SEC. 292. That any person who shall steal, purloin, embezzle, or obtain by any false pretense, or shall aid or assist in stealing, purloining, embezzling, or obtaining by any false pretense, any key suited to any lock adopted by the Postoffice Department, and in use on any of the mails or bags thereof; any person who shall knowingly and unlawfully make, forge or counterfeit, or cause to be unlawfully made, forged, or counterfeited, or knowingly aid or assist in making, forging, or counterfeiting, any such key; any person who shall have in his possession any such mail lock or key, with the intent unlawfully or improperly to use, sell, or otherwise dispose of the same, or to cause the same to be unlawfully or improperly used, sold, or otherwise disposed of; any person engaged as contractor or otherwise in the manufacture of any such mail locks or keys who shall deliver, or cause to be delivered, any finished or unfinished lock or key used or designed for use by said Department, or the interior part of any such lock, to any person not duly authorized, under the hand of the Postmaster General and the seal of the Postoffice Department to receive the same (unless the person receiving is the contractor for furnishing the same, or engaged in the manufacture thereof in the manner authorized by the contract, or the agent for such manufacturer), every such person shall be deemed guilty of felony, and, on conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned not exceeding ten years.

SEC. 293. That any person who shall forcibly break into, or attempt to break into, any postoffice, or any building used in whole or in part as a postoffice, with intent to commit therein larceny or other depredation, shall, on conviction thereof, be fined not more than one thousand dollars, and imprisoned at hard labor not more than five years, according to the circumstances and aggravation of the case, in the discretion of the court.

SEC. 294. That if any person or persons shall falsely make, alter, forge, or counterfeit, or cause or procure to be falsely made, altered, forged, or counterfeited, or willingly aid or assist in the false making, altering, forging, or counterfeiting, any bond, bid, proposal, guarantee, security, official bond, public record, affidavit, or other writing, for the purpose of defrauding the United States; or shall utter or publish as true, or cause to be uttered or published as true, any such false, forged, altered, or counterfeited bond, bid, proposal, guarantee, security, official bond, public record, affidavit, or other writing, for the purpose of defrauding the United States, knowing the same to be false, forged, altered, or counterfeited; or shall transmit to, or present at, or cause or procure to be transmitted to, or presented at, the office of any officer of the United States, any such false, forged, altered or counterfeited bond, bid, proposal guarantee, security, official bond, public record, affidavit or other writing, knowing the same to be false, forged, altered or counterfeited, for the purpose of defrauding the United States, every such person shall be deemed and adjudged guilty of felony, and, being thereof duly convicted, shall be sentenced to be imprisoned, and kept at hard labor, for a period not exceeding ten years, or be fined not exceeding one thousand dollars, or both of said punishments, in the discretion of the court.

SEC. 295. That if any offense shall be committed in any place which has been, or shall hereafter be, ceded to and under the jurisdiction of the United States, which offense is not prohibited, or the punishment thereof is not specially provided for by any law of the United States, such offense shall, upon conviction in any court of the United States having cognizance thereof, be liable to, and receive the same punishment as the laws of the State in which such place is or may be situated, now in force, provided for the like offense when committed within the jurisdiction of such State; and no subsequent appeal of any such State law shall affect any prosecution for such offense in any of the courts of the United States.

SEC. 296. That if any postmaster, or other person authorized by the Postmaster General to receive the postage of letters, shall fraudulently demand or receive any rate of postage, or gratuity, or reward, other than is provided by this act, for the postage of letters or packets, on conviction thereof, he shall forfeit, for every such offense, one hundred dollars.

SEC. 297. That if any person employed in any department of the postoffice establishment of the United States shall, willfully and knowingly, use, or cause to be used, in prepayment of postage any postage stamp, postal card, or stamped envelope issued, or which may hereafter be issued, by authority of any act of Congress or of the Postmaster General, which has already been once used for a like purpose, or shall remove, or attempt to remove, the canceling or defacing marks from any such postage stamp, or stamped envelope, or postal card, with intent to use or cause the use of the same a second time, or to sell or offer to sell the same, or shall remove from letters or other mail matter deposited in or received at a postoffice the stamps attached to the same in payment of postage, with intent to use the same a second time for a like purpose, or to sell or offer to sell the same, every such offender shall, upon conviction thereof, be deemed guilty of felony, and shall be imprisoned for not less than one year nor more than three years.

SEC. 298. That if any person not employed in any department of the postoffice establishment of the United States shall commit any of the offenses described in the preceding section every such person shall, on conviction thereof, be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and be punished by imprisonment for not less than six months nor more than one year, or by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, for each offense, or by both such fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

SEC. 299. That the Postmaster General of the United States may empower, by a letter of authorization under his hand, to be filed among the records of his department, any special agent or other officer of the postoffice establishment to make searches for mailable matter transported in violation of law; and that the agent or officer so authorized may open and search any car or vehicle passing, or lately before having passed, from any place at which there is a postoffice of the United States to any other such place, and any box, package or packet, being, or lately before having been, in such car or vehicle, and any store or house (other than a dwelling house), used or occupied by any common carrier or transportation company in which such box, package, or packet may be contained, whenever said agent or officer has reason to believe that mailable matter, transported contrary to law, may therein be found.

SEC. 300. That the Postmaster General may, upon evidence satisfactory to him that any person, firm, or corporation is engaged in conducting any fraudulent lottery, gift enterprise, or scheme for the distribution of money, or of any real or personal property, by lot, chance, or drawing of any kind, or in conducting any other scheme or device for obtaining money through the mails by means of false or fraudulent pretenses; representations or promises, forbid the payment by any postmaster to any such person, firm, or corporation of any postal money order drawn to the order or in favor of him or of them, and may provide by regulations for the return to the remitters of the sums named in such money orders. And the Postmaster General may also, upon like evidence, instruct postmasters at any postoffices at which registered letters shall arrive directed to any such person, firm or corporation, to return all such registered letters to the postmasters at the offices at which they were originally mailed, with the word "fraudulent" plainly written or stamped upon the outside of said letters; and all such letters so returned to such postmasters shall be by them returned to the writers thereof, under such regulations as the Postmaster General may prescribe; provided, that nothing in this act contained shall be so construed as to authorize any postmaster or other person to open any letter not addressed to himself.

SEC. 301. That if any person having devised or intending to devise any scheme or artifice to defraud, or be effected by either opening or intending to open correspondence or communication with any other person (whether resident within or outside of the United States), by means of the postoffice establishment of the United States, or by inciting such other person to open communication with the person so devising or intending, shall, in and for executing such scheme or artifice (or attempting so to do), place any letter or packet in any postoffice of the United States, or take or receive any therefrom, such person so misusing the postoffice establishment shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished with a fine of not more than five hundred dollars, with or without such imprisonment, as the court shall direct, not exceeding eighteen calendar months. The indictment, information, or complaint may severally charge offenses to the number of three when committed within the same six calendar months; but the court thereupon shall give a single sentence, and and shall proportion the punishment especially to the degree in which the abuse of the postoffice establishment enters as an instrument into such fraudulent scheme and device.

SEC. 302. That all letters, packets, or other matter which may be seized or detained for violation of law shall be returned to the owner or sender of the same, or otherwise disposed of as the Postmaster General may direct.

SEC. 303. That all suits arising under the postal laws, or the regulations of the Postmaster General pursuant thereto, shall be instituted in the name of the United States of America, and the demands in such suits shall have all the privileges and priorities in adjudication of payment secured by law to other claims of the United States.

SEC. 304. That all causes of action arising under the postal laws may be sued, and all offenders against the same may be prosecuted before the circuit or district courts of the United States.

SEC. 305. That all causes of action arising under the postal laws may be sued, and all offenders against the same may be prosecuted before the justices of the peace, magistrates or other judicial courts of the several States and Territories, having competent jurisdiction by the laws thereof, to the trial of claims and demands of as great value, and of prosecutions where the punishments are of as great extent; and such justices, magistrates or judiciary shall take cognizance thereof, and proceed to judgment and execution as in other cases.

SEC. 306. That in all suits or causes arising under the postal laws the court shall proceed to trial and render judgment the first term after commencement of suit; but whenever service of process shall not be made at least twenty days previous to the return day of such term, the defendant shall be entitled to one continuance, if on his statement the court shall deem it expedient; and if said defendant shall make affidavit that he has a claim against the Postoffice Department, which has been submitted to and disallowed by the auditor for said department, and shall specify such claim in his affidavit, and that he could not be prepared for trial at such term for want of evidence, the court, being satisfied in these respects, may grant a continuance until the next succeeding term.

SEC. 307. That no claim for a credit shall be allowed upon the trial of any suit for delinquency against a postmaster, contractor, or other officer, agent or employe of the Postoffice Department, unless the same shall have been presented to the auditor for said department and by him disallowed, in whole or in part, unless it shall be proved, to the satisfaction of the court, that the defendant is, at the time of trial, in possession of vouchers not before in his power to procure, and that he was prevented from exhibiting to the said auditor a claim for such credit by some unavoidable accident.

SEC. 308. That in all suits for balances due the Postoffice Department, interest thereon shall be recovered from the time of the default until payment at the rate of six per centum per annum.

SEC. 309. That in the prosecution of any suit for money due the Postoffice Department, the United States attorney shall obey the directions which may be given him by the Department of Justice; and immediately after the end of every term of any court in which any suit has been pending, said attorney shall forward to the Department of Justice a statement of any judgment or order made, or step taken in the same, during such term, accompanied by a certificate of the clerk, showing the parties to and amount of every such judgment, with such other information as the Department of Justice may require. And the said attorney shall direct speedy and effectual execution upon said judgment, and the United States marshal to whom the same is directed shall make returns of the proceedings thereon to the Department of Justice at such times as it may direct.

SEC. 310. That when proceedings at law for money due the Postoffice Department shall be fruitless, the said Department of Justice may direct the institution of a suit in chancery in any United States district or circuit court, to set aside fraudulent conveyances or trusts, or attach debts due the defendant, or obtain any other proper exercise of the powers of equity to have satisfaction of any judgment against such defendant.

SEC. 311. That in case of delinquency of any postmaster, contractor, or other officer, agent or employe of the Postoffice Department, in which suit may be brought, the Auditor for said Department shall forward to the Department of Justice certified copies of all papers in his office tending to sustain the claim.

SEC. 312. That copies of the quarterly returns of postmasters, and of any papers pertaining to the accounts, in the office of the Auditor for the Postoffice Department, and transcripts from the money order account books of said office, when certified by the Auditor under the seal of his office, shall be admitted as evidence in the courts of the United States, both in criminal and civil cases.

SEC. 313. That in all suits for the recovery of balances due from postmasters, a copy, duly certified under the seal of the Auditor for the Postoffice Department, of the statement of any postmaster, special agent, or other person employed by the Postmaster General or the Auditor for that purpose, that he has mailed a letter to such delinquent postmaster at the postoffice where the indebtedness accrued, or at his last usual place of above; that a sufficient time has elapsed for said letter to have reached its destination in the ordinary course of the mail; and that payment of such balance has not been received within the time designated in his instructions, shall be received as sufficient evidence in the courts of the United States, or other courts, that a demand has been made upon the delinquent postmaster; but when the account of a late postmaster has been once adjusted and settled, and a demand has been made for the balance appearing to be due, and afterward allowances are made or credits entered, it shall not be necessary to make a further demand for the new balance found to be due.

SEC. 314. That the Postmaster General may discharge from imprisonment any person confined in jail on any judgment in a civil case, obtained in behalf of the Department, if it be made to appear that the defendant has no property of any description; but such release shall not bar a subsequent execution against the property of the defendant on the same judgment.

SEC. 315. That in all cases where a judgment shall have been obtained for a debt or damages due the Postoffice Department, and it shall satisfactorily appear that such judgment, or so much thereof as remains unpaid, can not be collected by due process of law, the Auditor for the said Department may, with the written consent of the Postmaster General, compromise such judgment, and accept in satisfactian less than the full amount thereof.

SEC. 316. That in all cases of fine, penalty, forfeiture, or disability, or alleged liability for any sum of money by way of damages or otherwise, under any provision of law in relation to the officers, employes, operations or business of the postal service, the Postmaster General may prescribe such general rules and modes of proceeding as shall appear to be expedient, for the government of the Auditor for the Postoffice Department, in ascertaining the fact in each case in which said Auditor shall certify to him that the interests of the department probably require the exercise of the power conferred by this and the preceding section; and upon the fact being ascertained, said Auditor may, with the written consent of the Postmaster General, mitigate or remit such fine, penalty or forfeiture, remove such disability or compromise, release or discharge such claim for such sum of money and damages, and on such terms as the said Auditor shall deem just and expedient.

SEC. 317. That one-half of all pecuniary penalties and forfeitures incurred for the violation of any law in relation to the postal service shall be for the use of the person informing and prosecuting for the same, and the other for the use of the United States, except where other disposition thereof is specially provided.

SEC. 318. That in all cases where debts are due from defaulting or delinquent postmasters, contractors, or other officers, agents, or employes of the Postoffice Department, a warrant of attachment may issue against all real and personal property and legal and equitable rights belonging to such officer, agent, or employe, and his sureties, or either of them, in the following cases:

First—When such officer, agent, or employe, and his sureties, or either of them, is a non-resident of the district where such officer, agent, or employe was appointed, or has departed from such district for the purpose of permanently residing out of the same, or of defrauding the United States, or of avoiding the service of civil process.

Second—When such officer, agent, or employe, and his sureties, or either of them, has conveyed away, or is about to convey away, his property, or any part thereof, or has removed, or is about to remove, the same, or any part thereof, from the district wherein it is situated, with intent to defraud the United States.

And when any such property has been removed, certified copies of the warrant may be sent to the marshal of the district into which the same has been removed, under which certified copies he may seize said property and convey it to some convenient point within the jurisdiction of the court from which the warrant originally issued. And alias warrants may be issued in such cases upon due application, and the validity of the warrant first issued shall continue until the return day thereof.

SEC. 319. That application for such warrant of attachment may be made by any district or assistant district attorney, or by any other person authorized by the Postmaster General, before the judge, or, in his absence, before the clerk of any court of the United States having original jurisdiction of the cause of action. And such application shall be made upon an affidavit of the applicant, or some other credible person, stating the existence of either of the grounds of attachment enumerated in the preceding section, and upon production of legal evidence of the debt.

SEC. 320. That upon any such application, and upon due order of any judge of the court, or, in his absence, without such order, the clerk shall issue a warrant for the attachment of all the property of any kind belonging to the person specified in the affidavit, which warrant shall be executed with all possible dispatch by the marshal, who shall take the property attached, if personal, into his custody, and hold the same subject to all interlocutory or final orders of the court.

SEC. 321. That any time within twenty days before the return day of such warrant, the party whose property is attached may, on giving notice to the district attorney of his intention, file a plea in abatement, traversing the allegations of the affidavit, or denying the ownership of the property attached to be in the defendants, or either of them, in which case the court may, upon application of either party, order an immediate trial by jury of the issues raised by the affidavit and plea; but the parties may, by consent, waive a trial by jury, in which case the court shall decide the issues raised. Any party claiming ownership of the property attached, and a specific return thereof, shall be confined to the remedy herein afforded, but his right to an action of trespass, or other action for damages, shall not be impaired hereby.

SEC. 322. That when the property attached shall be sold on an interlocutory order of the court, or when it shall be producing any revenue, the money arising from such sale or revenue shall be invested in securities of the United States, under the order of the court, and all accretions shall be held subject to the orders of the same.

SEC. 323. That immediately upon the execution of any such warrant of attachment, the marshal shall cause due publication thereof to be made, in case of absconding debtors for two months, and of non-residents for four months. The publication shall be made in some newspaper published in the district where the property is situate, and the details thereof shall be regulated by the order under which the warrant is issued.

SEC. 324. That after the first publication of such notice of attachment as required by law, every person indebted to, or having possession of any property belonging to the said defendants, or either of them, and having knowledge of such notice, shall account and answer for the amount of such debt, and the value of such property; and any disposal or attempt to dispose of any such property, to the injury of the United States, shall be illegal and void. And when the person indebted to, or having possession of the property of, such defendants, or either of them, shall be known to the district attorney or or marshal, such officer shall see that personal notice of the attachment is served upon such person; but the want of such notice shall not invalidate the attachment.

SEC. 325. That upon application of the party whose property has been attached, the court, or any judge thereof, may discharge the warrant of attachment as to the property of the applicant, provided such applicant shall execute to the United States a good and sufficient penal bond, in double the value of the property attached, to be approved by a judge of the court, and with condition for the return of said property, or to answer any judgment which may be rendered by the court in the premises.

SEC. 326. That nothing herein contained shall be construed to limit or abridge, in any manner, such rights of the United States as have accrued or been allowed in any district under the former practice of, or the adoption of State laws by, the United States courts.

SEC. 327. That the following acts and parts of acts and resolutions and parts of resolutions are hereby repealed, but such repeal shall not be construed to affect or extend to any crimes or offenses heretofore committed, and which are punishable under any law hereby repealed; but all such crimes and offenses shall be prosecuted, determined and punished according to the said laws, the same as if this act had not passed, nor shall such repeal be construed to affect any appointment to office, or any contract, debt or demand under or by virtue of the said laws, but all such appointments, contracts, debts and demands shall have full force and effect, the same as if this act had not passed. That the references to the said acts hereby repealed are to the same as contained in the edition of the Statutes at Large, published by Little, Brown & Company, under and by virtue of the resolution of March three, eighteen hundred and forty-five, and the continuation thereof.

Act of March 3, 1791, chapter 23, volume 1, page 218, in part, namely, section 2.
Act of May 8, 1794, chapter 23, volume 1, page 354, in part, namely, sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28.
Act of March 3, 1797, chapter 19, volume 1, page 509, in part, namely, sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.
Act of June 22, 1798, chapter 56, volume 1, page 569.
Act of March 2, 1799, chapter 43, volume 1, page 733.
Act of December 15, 1800, chapter 1, volume 2, page 88, in part, namely, sections 1, and 2.
Act of February 18, 1802, chapter 5, volume 2, page 130, in part, namely, so much as relates to franking and free mail matter of Delegates.
Act of May 3, 1802, chapter 48, volume 2, page 189, in part, namely, sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.
Act of March 26, 1804, chapter 34, volume 2, page 275, in part, namely, sections 3 and 4.
Act of March 3, 1807, chapter 43, volume 2, page 444, in part, namely, section 1.
Act of April 30, 1810, chapter 37, volume 2, page 592.
Act of January 17, 1811, chapter 4, volume 2, page 615.
Act of January 14, 1813, chapter 9, volume 2, page 790.
Act of February 27, 1813, chapter 34, volume 2, page 805.
Act of July 13, 1813, chapter 9, volume 3, page 4.
Act of April 18, 1814, chapter 75, volume 3, page 130, in part, namely, sections 3 and 4.
Act of February 27, 1815, chapter 65, volume 3, page 220.
Act of April 9, 1816, chapter 43, volume 3, page 264.
Act of March 3, 1819, chapter 107, volume 3, page 536.
Act of March 13, 1820, chapter 23, volume 3, page 548.
Act of December 19, 1821, chapter 1, volume 3, page 649.
Act of May 8, 1822, chapter 127, volume 3, page 702, in part, namely, section 3.
Act of March 3, 1823, chapter 33, volume 3, page 764, in part, namely, section 3.
Act of March 3, 1825, chapter 46, volume 4, page 95, in part, namely, sections 2, 3 and 4.
Act of March 3, 1825, chapter 64, volume 4, page 102.
Act of March 2, 1827, chapter 61, volume 4, page 238.
Act of March 2, 1827, chapter 62, volume 4, page 239.
Act of May 24, 1828, chapter 99, volume 4, page 303, in part, namely, so much of section 1 as authorizes the employment of additional clerks and fixes their salaries.
Act of May 9, 1836, chapter 59, volume 5, page 17, in part, namely, so much of section 1 as relates to the duties of the Postmaster General.
Act of July 2, 1836, chapter 270, volume 5, page 80.
Act of July 7, 1838, chapter 172, volume 5, page 271, in part, namely, section 2.
Act of January 25, 1839, chapter 4, volume 5, page 314.
Act of July 30, 1842, chapter 107, volume 5, page 498, in part, namely, section 1, and so much of section 3 as authorizes the employment of additional clerks.
Act of August 20, 1842, chapter 255, volume 5, page 538, in part, namely, section 1.
Act of February 15, 1843, chapter 31, volume 5, page 600.
Act of March 3, 1845, chapter 43, volume 5, page 732.
Act of March 3, 1845, chapter 69, volume 5, page 748.
Act of March 3, 1845, chapter 71, volume 5, page 752, in part, namely, section 8.
Act of March 1, 1847, chapter 33, volume 9, page 147.
Act of March 2, 1847, chapter 37, volume 9, page 152, in part, namely, the several provisos in section 5, relating to compensation of deputy postm