CHAP. LXXIX. - An Act to amend the Act to provide for the Transportation of the Mail between the United States and foreign Countries, and for other Pur-DOSES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Postmaster-General, under the direction of the President of the United ter-General States, be, and he is hereby, authorized and empowered to charge upon, and collect from, all letters and other mailable matter carried to letters, &c., caror 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 rate of which the government to which such foreign packet or other vessel be- which the gov. longs imposes upon letters and other mailable matter conveyed to or from which such forsuch foreign country in American packets or other vessels, as the post- eign packets beage of such government, and at any time to revoke the same. And it long impose upon shall be the duty of all custom-house officers and other United States ried in American agents, designated or appointed for that purpose, to enforce or carry packets. 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 States officers reand agents, on suspicion of fraud, to open and examine, in the pres- quired to aid in ence 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 pre- packages authorvent, if necessary, such packets or other vessels from entering, break- ized. ing bulk, or making clearance, until all such letters or other mailable matter are duly delivered into the United States post-office.

SEC. 2. And be it further enacted, That all letters or other mailable matter conveyed to or from any port of the United States, by any conveyed by any foreign packet or foreign packet or ship except such unsealed letters relating to said ship to or from ship or vessel, or any part of the cargo thereof, as may be directed to any port of the United States to the owner or owners, consignee or consignees, of said ship or other be subject to vessel, shall be so subject to postage charge as aforesaid, whether postage charge as addressed to any person in the United States or elsewhere: *Provided*, aforesaid, except It is done by the packet or other ship of a foreign country imposing the vessels or carpostage on letters or mailable matter conveyed to or from such coun- goes, directed to try, by any packet or other ship of the United States; and such letters the owners and consignees of or other mailable matter carried in foreign packet ships or other said vessels. 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 post-office by the master or commanders of all such packets or other vessels when arriving, and to be taken from a United States post-office 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 fusing or failing so, or for conveying said letters, or any letters intended to be conveyed to comply with in any ship or vessel of such foreign country, over or across the United the provisions of States, or any portion thereof, the party offending shall, on conviction, this section. forfeit and pay not exceeding five thousand dollars for each offence.

SEC. 3. And be it further enacted, That in case the person or persons, or the directors of any incorporated company, who have entered into any contract, or who may hereafter enter into any contract, with ^{retuse} to deliver the Postmaster-General, for conveying the mail of the United States to ed value, the any foreign country, in pursuance of the act entitled "An Act to provide for the transportation of the mail between the United States and in carrying said foreign countries, and for other purposes," approved the third day of mails. March, eighteen hundred and forty-five, or of any other act, in which said contract there is a stipulation, on the part of such contractor, giving to the United States the right to purchase, at an appraised value, the steam-ship or ships required by such contract to be employed in

June 27, 1848.

1845, ch. 69.

The Postmasto charge upon and collect from all packets, the same postage

Custom-house and other United carrying this pro-vision into effect.

Examination of

All letters, &c.,

Penalty for re-

Penalty on contractors who shall refuse to deliver steam-ships employed by them

1845, ch. 69.

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conveying the mail, shall decline to sell and deliver to the United States such ship or ships, or shall refuse to name and appoint appraisers to value the same, agreeably to the provisions of said act, or the same having been appraised and valued, shall refuse to convey and deliver said ship or ships to the United States, on the payment, or tender of payment, by the United States, of the sum at which the said ship or ships may have been appraised and valued, such person or persons so offending shall forfeit a sum not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars, to be recovered in any proper action, for the use of the treasury of the United States; and in case of refusal or inability to pay the same, shall be liable to be imprisoned not exceeding one year, at the discretion of the court rendering judgment for such penalty.

SEC. 4. And be it further enacted, That to secure the regular transmission of the mail to and from foreign countries, the Postmaster-General be, and he is hereby, authorized and required to impose fines on contractors, for any unreasonable or unnecessary delay in the departure of such mails, or in the performance of the trip: Provided, That the fine for any one default shall not exceed one half of the contract price paid for the trip.

SEC. 5. And be it further enacted, That it shall not be lawful for any contractor for transporting the mail to any foreign country to assign or transfer his contracts; and all such assignments or transfers shall be null and void : Provided, That assignments and transfers which have been made and accepted by the Postmaster-General or the Secretary of the Navy before the passage of this act, shall not be affected by this section.

APPROVED, June 27, 1848.

CHAP. LXXXII. — An Act concerning the taking of official Oaths in the District of Columbia. June 28, 1848.

> Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all official oaths required by law to be taken by officers of the United States may, in the District of Columbia, be administered and certified by any one of the judges of the Circuit Court, or by the judge of the Criminal Court offi- of the said District.

Approved, June 28, 1848.

June 28, 1848.

Any one of the judges of the Cir-

the

cuit Court, or the judge of the

Criminal Court,

of the District of

Columbia,

administer cial oaths.

CHAP. LXXXIII. - An Act respecting certain Surveys in the State of Florida.

Certain islands, keys, and other lands in South Florida to be surveyed.

Expense of survevs limited.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the commissioner of the General Land Office is hereby authorized and directed to cause to be surveyed, as soon as practicable, the islands and keys, and other lands in South Florida, interspersed with water, which cannot conveniently be connected with the regular public surveys; and also the private claims or grants which have been duly confirmed, situate in said State; and that such surveys of said islands, keys, and lands interspersed with water as aforesaid may be made by such persons on such terms, and in such mode and manner, as said commissioner may deem most expedient and proper, without connection thereof with the other public surveys, by township lines; but the expense thereof shall not exceed the maximum price per mile heretofore allowed for surveys by the United States in other States or Territories; and the surveys of said private claims or grants may be made by such persons, and on such terms, as said commissioner may deem most expedient and proper; but the expense thereof shall not in any case exceed twenty

Postmaster-General may impose fines on contractors for unreasonable or unnecessary delay, &c.

Proviso.

Contracts for foreign mail service not to be assignable.

Proviso.