
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DECEMBER 20, 1865.

Read twice, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, and ordered to be printed. Motion to reconsider the vote of commitment pending.

Mr. STEVENS, on leave, introduced the following bill:

A BILL

To double the pensions of those who were made pensioners by the casualties of the late war; to pay the damages done to loyal men by the rebel government and rebel raiders; and enforce the confiscation laws, so as to pay the same out of the confiscated property of the enemy.

Whereas it is due to justice, and as an example to future times, that some proper punishment should be inflicted on the people who constituted the "confederate States of America," both because they declaring an unjust war against the United States for the purpose of destroying republican liberty and permanently establishing slavery, as well as for the cruel and barbarous manner in which they conducted said war, in violation of all the laws of civilized warfare, and also to compel them to make some compensation for the damages and expenditures caused by said war: Therefore—

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That all the public lands belonging to the eleven States that
4 formed the government of the so-called "confederate States of
5 America" shall be forfeited by said States and become forth-
6 with vested in the United States.

1 SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That the President
2 shall forthwith proceed to cause the seizure of such of the
3 property belonging to the belligerent enemy as is deemed
4 forfeited by the act of seventeenth July, anno Domini,
5 eighteen hundred and sixty-two, and hold and appropriate the
6 same as enemy's property, and to proceed to condemnation
7 with that already seized.

1 SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That in lieu of the
2 proceeding to condemn the property thus seized, as enemy's
3 property, as is provided by the act of July seventeen, anno
4 Domini eighteen hundred and sixty-two, two commissions
5 or more, as by him may be deemed necessary, shall be
6 appointed by the President for each of the said "confederate
7 States," to consist of three persons each, one of whom shall be
8 an officer of the late or present army, and two shall be civil-
9 ians, neither of whom shall be citizens of the State for which
10 he shall be appointed; and that the said commissions shall
11 proceed to adjudicate and condemn the property aforesaid,
12 under such forms and proceedings as shall be prescribed by
13 the Attorney General of the United States; whereupon the
14 title to said property shall become vested in the United States.

1 SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted,* That out of the lands
2 thus seized and confiscated, the slaves who have been liber-
3 ated by the operations of the war and the amendment to the
4 Constitution, or otherwise, who resided in said "confederate

5 States” on the fourth day of March, anno Domini eighteen
6 hundred and sixty-one, or since, shall have distributed to them
7 as follows, namely : To each male person who is the head of a
8 family, forty acres ; to each adult male, whether the head of a
9 family or not, forty acres ; to each widow, who is the head of a
10 family, forty acres ; to be held by them in fee simple, but to
11 be inalienable for the next ten years after they become seized
11 thereof. For the purpose of distributing and allotting said
13 land the Secretary of War shall appoint as many com-
14 missions in each State as he shall deem necessary, to con-
15 sist of three members each, two of whom at least shall not
16 be citizens of the State for which he is appointed. Each of
17 said commissioners shall receive a salary of
18 thousand dollars annually, and all his necessary expenses.
19 Each commission shall be allowed one clerk, whose salary
20 shall be per annum. The title to the homestead
21 aforesaid shall be vested in trustees for the use of the liber-
22 ated persons aforesaid ; trustees shall be appointed by the
23 Secretary of War, and shall receive such salary as he shall
24 direct, not exceeding three thousand dollars per annum. At
25 the end of ten years the absolute title to said homesteads
26 shall be conveyed to said owners or to the heirs of such as
27 are then dead.

1 SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted,* That out of the balance
2 of the property thus seized and confiscated there shall be

3 raised, in the manner hereinafter provided, a sum equal to
4 one hundred and fifty dollars, for each homestead, to be
5 applied by the trustees, hereinafter mentioned, towards the
6 erection of buildings on the said homesteads, for the use of
7 said slaves; and the further sum of five hundred millions of
8 dollars, which shall be appropriated as follows, to wit: three
9 hundred millions shall be invested in United States six per
10 cent. securities; and the interest thereof shall be semi-annually
11 added to the pensions allowed by law to pensioners who have
12 become so by reason of the late war; two hundred millions,
13 or so much thereof as may be needed, shall be appropriated
14 to pay damages done to loyal citizens by the civil or military
15 operations of the government lately called the “confederate
16 States of America.”

1 SEC. 6. *And be it further enacted,* That in order that just
2 discrimination may be made, the property of no one shall be
3 seized whose whole estate on the fourth day of March, anno
4 Domini eighteen hundred and sixty-five, was not worth more
5 than five thousand dollars, to be valued by the said commis-
6 sion, unless he shall have voluntarily become an officer or
7 employee in the military or civil service of the “confederate
8 States of America,” or in the civil or military service of some
9 one of said States, and in enforcing all confiscations the sum
10 or value of five thousand dollars in real or personal property
11 shall be left or assigned to the delinquent.

1 SEC. 7. *And be it further enacted,* That the commission

2 shall put a just and impartial valuation on all the property thus
 3 seized and forfeited, and when such valuation shall be com-
 4 pleted in the several States, all the said commissioners shall
 5 meet in the city of Washington and assess the five hundred
 6 millions aforesaid, as well as the allowances for homestead
 7 buildings, pro rata, on each of the properties or estates thus
 8 seized, and shall give notice of such assessment and appor-
 9 tionment by publication for sixty days in two daily news-
 10 papers in the city of Washington, and in two daily news-
 11 papers in the capitals of each of the said "confederate
 12 States."

1 SEC. 7. *And be it further enacted,* That if the owners
 2 of said seized and forfeited estates shall, within ninety days
 3 after the first of said publications, pay into the treasury of
 4 the United States the sum assessed on their estates respect-
 5 ively, all of their estates and lands not actually appropriated
 6 to the liberated slaves shall be released and restored to their
 7 owners.

1 SEC. 8. *And be it further enacted,* That all the land,
 2 estates, and property, of whatever kind, which shall not be
 3 redeemed as aforesaid, within ninety days, shall be sold and
 4 converted into money, in such time and manner as may be
 5 deemed by the said commissioners most advantageous to the
 6 United States: *Provided,* That no arable land shall be sold
 7 in larger tracts than five hundred acres: *And provided fur-*
 8 *ther,* That no longer credit shall be given than three years.

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