

§ 899. Limitation of quantity to be conveyed

No more lands shall be certified or conveyed to any State or to any corporation or individual, for the benefit of either of the companies herein mentioned, where it shall appear to the Secretary of the Interior that such transfers may create an excess over the quantity of lands to which such State, corporation, or individual would be rightfully entitled.

(Mar. 3, 1887, ch. 376, § 7, 24 Stat. 558.)

§ 900. Suits to cancel patents to lands erroneously issued under railroad or wagon-road grants

Suits by the United States to vacate and annul any patent to lands erroneously issued under a railroad or wagon-road grant shall only be brought within six years after the date of the issuance of such patents. But no patent to any lands held by a bona fide purchaser shall be vacated or annulled, but the right and title of such purchaser is hereby confirmed: *Provided*, That no suit shall be brought or maintained, nor shall recovery be had for lands or the value thereof, that were certified or patented in lieu of other lands covered by a grant which were lost or relinquished by the grantee in consequence of the failure of the Government or its officers to withdraw the same from sale or entry.

(Mar. 2, 1896, ch. 39, § 1, 29 Stat. 42.)

§ 901. Claims of bona fide purchasers; establishment of rights

If any person claiming to be a bona fide purchaser of any lands erroneously patented or certified shall present his claim to the Secretary of the Interior prior to the institution of a suit to cancel a patent or certification, and if it shall appear that he is a bona fide purchaser, the Secretary of the Interior shall request that suit be brought in such case against the patentee, or the corporation, company, person, or association of persons for whose benefit the certification was made, for the value of said land, which in no case shall be more than the minimum Government price thereof, and the title of such claimant shall stand confirmed. An adverse decision by the Secretary of the Interior on the bona fides of such claimant shall not be conclusive of his rights, and if such claimant, or one claiming to be a bona fide purchaser, but who has not submitted his claim to the Secretary of the Interior, is made a party to such suit, and if found by the court to be a bona fide purchaser, the court shall decree a confirmation of the title, and shall render a decree in behalf of the United States against the patentee, corporation, company, person, or association of persons for whose benefit the certification was made for the value of the land as hereinbefore provided. Any bona fide purchaser of lands patented or certified to a railroad company, and who is not made a party to such suit, and who has not submitted his claim to the Secretary of the Interior, may establish his right as such bona fide purchaser in any United States court having jurisdiction of the subject matter, or at his option, as prescribed in sections 896 and 897 of this title.

(Mar. 2, 1896, ch. 39, § 2, 29 Stat. 43.)

§ 902. Cancellation; investigation before suit

If at any time prior to the institution of suit by the Attorney General to cancel any patent or certification of lands erroneously patented or certified a claim or statement is presented to the Secretary of the Interior by or on behalf of any person or persons, corporation or corporations, claiming that such person or persons, corporation or corporations, is a bona fide purchaser or are bona fide purchasers of any patented or certified land by deed or contract or otherwise, from or through the original patentee or corporation to which patent or certification was issued, no suit or action shall be brought to cancel or annul the patent or certification for said land until such claim is investigated in said Department of the Interior; and if it shall appear that such person or corporation is a bona fide purchaser as aforesaid, or that such persons or corporations are such bona fide purchasers, then no such suit shall be instituted and the title of such claimant or claimants shall stand confirmed; but the Secretary of the Interior shall request that suit be brought in such case against the patentee, or the corporation, company, person, or association of persons for whose benefit the patent was issued or certification was made for the value of the land as hereinbefore specified.

(Mar. 2, 1896, ch. 39, § 3, 29 Stat. 43.)

§ 903. Relief of settlers on lands granted in aid of wagon roads

The provision of section 888 of this title and all statutes amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto, including sections 894 to 899 of this title, as modified or supplemented by sections 900 to 902 of this title, shall apply to grants of land in aid of the construction of wagon roads.

(July 1, 1902, ch. 1386, 32 Stat. 733.)

§ 904. Forfeiture of unearned grants; restoration to public domain

There is forfeited to the United States, and the United States resumes the title thereto, all lands granted prior to September 29, 1890, to any State or to any corporation to aid in the construction of a railroad opposite to and coterminous with the portion of any such railroad not on that date completed, and in operation, for the construction or benefit of which such lands were granted; and all such lands are declared to be a part of the public domain: *Provided*, That sections 904 to 907 of this title shall not be construed as forfeiting the right-of-way or station grounds of any railroad company granted prior to September 29, 1890.

(Sept. 29, 1890, ch. 1040, § 1, 26 Stat. 496.)

§ 905. Homestead entries on forfeited lands

All persons who, on September 29, 1890, were actual settlers in good faith on any of the lands forfeited by section 904 of this title and were otherwise qualified, on making due claim on said lands under the homestead law within six

months after the date of the promulgation by the Commissioner of the General Land Office of the instructions to the officers of the local land offices, for their direction in the disposition of said lands, shall be entitled to a preference right to enter the same under the provisions of the homestead law and sections 904 to 907 of this title, and shall be regarded as such actual settlers from the date of actual settlement or occupation; and any person who prior to September 29, 1890, has not had the benefit of the homestead or preemption law, or who has failed from any cause to perfect the title to a tract of land theretofore entered by him under either of said laws, may make a second homestead entry under the provisions of sections 904 to 907 of this title. The Secretary of the Interior shall make such rules as will secure to such actual settlers these rights: *Provided*, That nothing herein shall extend any time or enlarge any rights given by sections 904 to 907 of this title to any railroad company.

(Sept. 29, 1890, ch. 1040, §2, 26 Stat. 496; Feb. 18, 1891, ch. 244, 26 Stat. 764.)

TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS

For transfer of functions of other officers, employees, and agencies of Department of the Interior, with certain exceptions, to Secretary of the Interior, with power to delegate, see Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1950, §§1, 2, eff. May 24, 1950, 15 F.R. 3174, 64 Stat. 1262, set out under section 1451 of this title.

Office of Commissioner of General Land Office abolished and functions transferred to Secretary of the Interior, or that officer as he may designate, by Reorg. Plan No. 3 of 1946, §403, eff. July 16, 1946, 11 F.R. 7876, 60 Stat. 1100. See note set out under section 1 of this title.

§ 906. Purchase by bona fide purchasers from grantees; removal of crops and improvements

In all cases where persons being citizens of the United States, or who have declared their intentions to become such, in accordance with the naturalization laws of the United States, are in possession of any of the lands affected by any such grant and resumed by and restored to the United States, under deed, written contract with, or license from, the State or corporation to which such grant was made, or its assignees, executed prior to January 1, 1888, or where persons may have settled said lands with bona fide intent to secure title thereto by purchase from the State or corporation when earned by compliance with the conditions or requirements of the granting Acts of Congress they shall be entitled to purchase the same from the United States, in quantities not exceeding three hundred and twenty acres to any one such person, at the rate of \$1.25 per acre, at any time prior to January 1, 1899, and on making said payments to receive patents therefor, and where any such person in actual possession of any such lands and having improved the same prior to the 1st day of January, 1890, under deed, written contract, or license as aforesaid, or his assignor, has made partial or full payments to said railroad company prior to said date, on account of the purchase price of said lands from it, on proof of the amount of such payments he shall be entitled to have the same, to the extent and amount of \$1.25

per acre, if so much has been paid, and not more, credited to him on account of and as part of the purchase price herein provided to be paid the United States for said lands, or such persons may elect to abandon their purchases and make claim on said lands under the homestead law and as provided in section 905 of this title: *Provided*, That in all cases where parties, persons, or corporations, with the permission of such State or corporation, or its assignees, are in the possession of and have made improvements upon any of the lands resumed and restored, and are not entitled to enter the same under the provisions of sections 904 to 907 of this title, such parties, persons, or corporations shall have six months in which to remove any growing crop, and within which time they shall also be entitled to remove all buildings and other movable improvements from said lands: *Provided further*, That the provisions of this section shall not apply to any lands situated in the State of Iowa on which any person in good faith has made or asserted the right to make a preemption or homestead settlement: *And provided further*, That nothing in sections 904 to 907 of this title contained shall be construed as limiting the rights granted to purchasers or settlers by sections 894 to 899 of this title, or as repealing, altering, or amending said sections, nor as in any manner affecting any cause of action existing in favor of any purchaser against his grantor for breach of any covenants of title.

Actual residence upon the lands by persons claiming the right to purchase the same shall not be required where such lands have been fenced, cultivated, or otherwise improved by such claimants, and such persons shall be permitted to purchase two or more tracts of such lands by legal subdivisions, whether contiguous or not, but not exceeding three hundred and twenty acres in the aggregate.

Nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to interfere with any adverse claim that may have attached to the lands or any part thereof.

(Sept. 29, 1890, ch. 1040, §3, 26 Stat. 496; Feb. 18, 1891, ch. 244, 26 Stat. 764; June 25, 1892, ch. 133, 27 Stat. 59; Jan. 31, 1893, ch. 54, 27 Stat. 427; Dec. 12, 1893, ch. 1, 28 Stat. 15; Jan. 23, 1896, ch. 8, 29 Stat. 4; Feb. 18, 1897, ch. 250, 29 Stat. 535.)

§ 907. Rights of original grantees to forfeited lands

No lands declared forfeited to the United States by sections 904 to 907 of this title shall by reason of such forfeiture inure to the benefit of any State or corporation to which lands may have been granted by Congress, except as therein otherwise provided; nor shall said sections be construed to enlarge the area of land originally covered by any such grant, or to confer any right upon any State, corporation, or person to lands which were excepted from such grant. Nor shall the moiety of the lands granted to any railroad company on account of a main and a branch line appertaining to uncompleted road, and forfeited by section 904 of this title, within the conflicting limits of the grants for such main and branch lines, when but one of such lines has been completed, inure by virtue of the