

With July, 1798.

CHAP. [94.] An act for the relief of sick and disabled seamen.¹

§ 1. *Be it enacted, Sfc.* That from and after the first day of September next, the master or owner of every ship or vessel of the United States, arriving from a foreign port into any port of the United States, shall, before such ship or vessel shall be admitted to an entry, render to the collector a true account of the number of seamen that shall have been employed on board such vessel since she was last entered at any port in the United States, and shall pay, to the said collector, at the rate of twenty cents per month for every seaman so employed ; which sum he is hereby authorized to retain out of the wages of such seamen.

§ 2. That from and after the first day of September next, no collector shall grant to any ship or vessel whose enrollment or license for carrying on the coasting trade has expired, a new enrollment or license, before the master of such ship or vessel shall first render a true account to the collector, of the number of seamen, and the time they have severally been employed on board such ship or vessel, during the continuance of the license which has so expired, and pay to such collector twenty cents per month for every month such seamen have been severally employed as aforesaid ; which sum the said master is hereby authorized to retain out of the wages of such seamen. And if any such master shall render a false account of the number of men, and the length of time they have severally been employed, as is herein required, he shall forfeit and pay one hundred dollars.

§ 3. That it shall be the duty of the several collectors to make a quarterly return of the sums collected by them, respectively, by virtue of this act, to the secretary of the treasury ; and the president of the United States is hereby authorized, out of the same, to provide for the temporary relief and maintenance of sick, or disabled seamen, in the hospitals or other proper institutions now established in the several ports of the United States, or in ports where no such institutions exist, then in such other manner as he shall direct: *Provided*, that the moneys collected in any one district, shall be expended within the same.

§ 4. That if any surplus shall remain of the moneys to be collected by virtue of this act, after defraying the expense of such temporary relief and support, that the same, together with such private donations as may be made for that purpose, (which the president is hereby authorized to receive,) shall be invested in the stock of the United States, under the direction of the president; and when, in his opinion, a sufficient fund shall be accumulated, he is hereby authorized to purchase or receive cessions or donations of ground or buildings, in the name of the United States, and to cause buildings, when necessary, to be erected as hospitals for the accommodation of sick and disabled seamen.

§ 5. That the president of the United States be, and he is hereby, authorized to nominate and appoint, in such ports of the United States as he may think proper, one or more persons, to be called directors of the marine hospital of the United States, whose duty it shall be to direct the expenditure of the fund assigned for their respective ports, according to the third section of this act; to provide for the accommodation of sick and disabled seamen, under such general

¹ Curtis, George Tickner. A Treatise on the Rights and Duties of Merchant Seamen, According to the General Maritime Law, and the Statutes of the United States. (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1841), 407-409

instructions as shall be given by the president of the United States for that purpose, and also, subject to the like general instructions, to direct and govern such hospitals, as the president may direct to be built in the respective ports : and that the said directors shall hold their offices during the pleasure of the president, who is authorized to fill up all vacancies that may be occasioned by the death or removal of any of the persons so to be appointed. And the said directors shall render an account of the moneys received and expended by them, once in every quarter of a year, to the secretary of the treasury, or such other person as the president shall direct; but no other allowance or compensation shall be made to the said directors, except the payment of such expenses as they may incur in the actual discharge of the duties required by this act. [*Approved, July 16, 1798.*]