

No. 241, S.]

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**CHAPTER 254.**

AN ACT to repeal chapter 119, laws of 1899, as last amended by chapter 22, laws of 1947, relating to jurisdiction of county court of St. Croix county; and to confer on the county court of St. Croix county civil and criminal jurisdiction.

*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Chapter 119, laws of 1899, as last amended by chapter 22, laws of 1947, is repealed.

SECTION 2. JURISDICTION CONFERRED ON COUNTY COURT OF ST. CROIX COUNTY. There is conferred upon the county court of St. Croix county, jurisdiction as follows:

(1) The county court of St. Croix county and the judge thereof shall take cognizance of and have jurisdiction to hear, try and determine all actions and proceedings at law,

except actions wherein the title to real property shall come in question, wherein the claim, debt, damage, penalty or forfeiture shall not exceed the sum of \$2,500; actions to recover the possession of personal property with damages for the unlawful taking or detention thereof wherein the value of the property claimed shall not exceed the sum of \$2,500; actions arising under chapter 291 when the amount claimed shall not exceed \$2,500; actions for forfeitures and actions for breach of any recognizance given in said court under the jurisdiction conferred by this act; all charges for criminal offenses arising within said county which are not punishable by commitment to the state prison; and all offenses arising under the charter and ordinances of St. Croix county and of all cities, towns and villages within said county.

(2) The judge of said county court shall have power and jurisdiction to cause to be brought before him all persons who may be charged with having committed any criminal offense within the county of St. Croix and to issue process therefor and to commit them to jail or require bail, as the case may require. Said judge shall have the jurisdiction, authority, power and rights given by law to justices of the peace, together with the power and right in his discretion to charge the jury upon written charges or otherwise. In the exercise of the jurisdiction conferred by this act said court shall have full power to grant adjournments and continuances.

(3) All criminal warrants issued by justices of the peace of said county of St. Croix may be made returnable before the county court of said county, at Hudson, and when said warrants are so issued and returned said county court and the judge thereof shall have jurisdiction to conduct all further proceedings thereon and to hear, try and determine the same in the same manner as if said warrants had been originally issued by the judge of said county court and made returnable before said court or the judge thereof.

(4) A judgment by confession may be entered before the judge of said county court in any sum not exceeding \$2,500, without action, either for money due or to come due, or to secure any person against contingent liability on behalf of the defendant, or both, if a statement in writing be made, signed by the defendant and verified by his oath, to the following effect: (a) it must state the amount for which judgment may be entered and authorize the entry of judgment thereof;

(b) If it be money due or to become due it must state concisely the facts out of which it arose, and must show that the sum confessed therefor is justly due or to become due;

(c) If it be for the purpose of securing the plaintiff against a contingent liability, it must state concisely the facts constituting the liability, and must show that the sum confessed does not exceed the same.

(5) The county court of St. Croix county shall be a court of general jurisdiction and when designated pursuant to law as the juvenile court, shall have the jurisdiction over all cases of neglected, dependent and delinquent children and all powers and authority conferred by law upon juvenile courts in the state of Wisconsin.

SECTION 3. PROCESS; SERVICE; PROCEDURE; PRACTICE. (1) The summons in all civil actions in the county court of St. Croix county of which jurisdiction is conferred upon it by this act, may be served in the same manner and with like effect as provided for service of summons in circuit courts and may be in the following form:

State of Wisconsin }  
St. Croix County } SS.

The state of Wisconsin, to the sheriff, or any constable of said county, or any other person not a party to the action:

You are hereby commanded to summon A. B. if he shall be found within the state of Wisconsin, to appear before the undersigned, the county judge of said county, in the county court room at the court house in the city of Hudson in said county on the . . . . day of . . . . . A. D. 19. . . . ., at . . . . . o'clock in the . . . . . noon, to answer to C. D., plaintiff, to his damage, two thousand five hundred dollars, or under; hereof fail not at your peril.

Given under my hand at Hudson, Wisconsin, this . . . . . day of . . . . ., A. D. 19. . . . .

County Judge

(2) All other writs, warrants and process necessary to be issued under this chapter shall be in the form prescribed by law for justice of the peace and justice's courts, so far as applicable, but in and under the name of the county judge of St. Croix county. The judge of said court may issue any summons or other process in blank and deliver the same to an attorney duly authorized to practice law in Wisconsin, to be issued as such

attorney may require, and upon the filing of such summons or other process at any time on or before the day on which the same is made returnable, said judge shall forthwith docket said case, which docket entries shall have the same force and effect as if made at the time of issuing such summons or other process. No summons so issued shall be valid, unless the attorney indorses thereon his name or the name of his firm in substantially the following form: Issued by A. B., attorney. All process issued under the provisions of this act shall be made returnable within the same time and in the same manner as provided by law for the return and service of like process in courts of justices of the peace, provided that the maximum time within which all processes under the provisions of this act may be made returnable shall be 36 days.

(3) The parties shall in all cases join an issue of fact or of law at the time when said summons is returnable. The court at that time may order the case tried immediately or may, in its discretion, adjourn the trial until such time and place as he shall see fit. No adjournment shall be granted until issue shall have been joined as herein provided unless the court otherwise directs. Failure to adjourn a case to a day or a place certain shall not deprive or oust the court of jurisdiction or render any judgment void. If on the return date of said summons the plaintiff shall fail to appear the court may summarily dismiss the action on motion of the defendant or on its own motion. If on such return date the defendant shall fail to appear the court may enter a default judgment upon due proof of facts which show the plaintiff entitled thereto.

(4) The provisions of law relating to procedure and practice in civil and criminal actions or proceedings in courts of justices of the peace, so far as applicable and not inconsistent with this act, shall govern the practice and procedure in the county court of St. Croix county in all like criminal and civil actions and proceedings of which said court is conferred jurisdiction by this act; and appeals from judgments and other determinations of said county court in all such actions and proceedings may be taken at the same time, in the same manner and with like effect as is provided by law for taking appeals from like judgments and determinations of justices of the peace.

SECTION 4. SITUS AND SEAL OF COURT. The judge of said court when exercising the additional jurisdiction conferred by this chapter, shall hold court at the court house in the city of Hudson, and the county of St. Croix shall provide said court necessary dockets, records, stationery and blanks for the proper transaction of the business of said court. The seal of the county court now in use shall be the seal of said court under the additional jurisdiction conferred by this chapter. Said court shall be open for all business which may come before it under the additional jurisdiction conferred by this chapter on all secular days except legal holidays.

SECTION 5. SALARY OF COUNTY JUDGE. The salary of the county judge of St. Croix county for performing all duties pertaining to said office shall be \$6,000 per year, payable in equal monthly installments out of the treasury of St. Croix county, until the governing body of said county shall, by proper action, fix the salary at some other sum which shall not be less than \$6000 per year. Said judge shall receive no additional compensation for services as such or as juvenile judge. No person shall be eligible to the office of county judge of St. Croix county unless he shall be licensed to practice law in the state of Wisconsin and is a qualified elector of said county.

SECTION 6. COSTS, FINES, FEES, RECORDS. (1) In respect to all actions and proceedings in said county court under the additional jurisdiction conferred by this chapter, court fees shall be taxed in the following amounts:

(a) In civil actions the plaintiff shall pay the sum of \$1 upon filing the summons or other process by which such action is commenced, and the prevailing party shall pay the further sum of \$2 upon entry of money judgment in any sum not to exceed \$1,000, or the further sum of \$4 upon entry of money judgment in any sum above the amount of \$1,000. Upon the entry of any judgment other than a money judgment the prevailing party shall pay such fee as is comparable to fees for money judgments when the value of the subject of the action is considered or the additional sum of \$2 if no other fee is determinable. If such action be dismissed without trial or hearing the parties shall pay no further fee.

(b) In actions for the violation of the laws of this state and ordinances, by-laws, rules and regulations of St. Croix county and the towns, cities and villages of said county, a court fee shall be assessed in the sum of \$3.

(2) In respect to all actions and proceedings under the additional jurisdiction conferred by this chapter, all fines, forfeitures, costs, penalties and court fees shall be taxed and allowed in the same manner and amount as would be allowed in justice court except as herein otherwise provided.

(3) All fines, forfeitures and penalties and the costs, fees and disbursements, except

court fees, collected for violations of the ordinances, by-laws, rules and regulations of any city, village or town shall be paid to the treasurer of such city, village or town. All fines, penalties, costs, fees and disbursements in criminal actions or proceedings under the general laws of the state, all forfeitures, penalties, costs, fees and disbursements for violations of the ordinances of St. Croix county, and all court fees in all actions or proceedings under the jurisdiction conferred by this act shall be paid to the treasurer of St. Croix county.

SECTION 7. PROCESS SERVERS AND COURT OFFICERS. The sheriff of St. Croix county and his deputies shall be officers of said court and the sheriff and his deputies or any person authorized by law to serve process in circuit court may serve its processes and carry out its lawful orders and judgments throughout the state of Wisconsin and shall be entitled to receive the same fees therefor as for service of like process of the circuit court, provided that the police officers of any city in said county and the village marshal of any village in said county and their deputies shall have authority to serve and execute the civil and criminal processes of said court within the limits of the village or city in which such officers reside, except draw juries or attend such court as its officer during trials, and shall have authority and be required to serve and execute all processes issued out of said court wherein said village or city is a party plaintiff, and shall be entitled to receive the lawful fees therefor.

SECTION 8. ATTORNEY FEES ALLOWED. In all civil actions in the county court of St. Croix county under the provisions of this act an attorney's fee shall be allowed to the plaintiff if he shall recover judgment, as follows: If the judgment does not exceed \$100, a sum equal to 10 per cent of the judgment; when the judgment exceeds \$100, \$10 on the first \$100 and 5 per cent of the amount in excess of \$100; provided that in no case shall the amount of the attorney fee exceed the sum of \$50. In case judgment shall be for the defendant, he shall be entitled to recover attorney fees equal in amount to that which the plaintiff would have been entitled under this section if he had recovered judgment for the amount of his claim, but in no case shall the attorney fees exceed the sum of \$50. In actions of replevin the value of the property as proved shall govern the amount of attorney's fees in case judgment shall be for the plaintiff; and the value of the property as claimed shall govern the amount of attorney's fee in case judgment is for the defendant. If judgment shall be by default the attorney's fee shall be one-half what they would have been if the matter had been contested. In all civil actions not herein provided for an attorney's fee of \$10 shall be allowed to the party in whose favor judgment is rendered. No attorney's fee shall be allowed unless the prevailing party shall appear by an attorney of a court of record.

SECTION 9. SICKNESS; ABSENCE; DISABILITY; PREJUDICE. (1) In case of sickness, absence or temporary disability of the judge of said court, he may, by an order in writing, filed in said court, appoint any county judge of an adjoining county, court commissioner or justice of the peace of said county, to discharge the duties of said office conferred by this chapter during such sickness, absence or disability, and the person so appointed shall have the powers of such judge conferred by this chapter while administering such office.

(2) No action, examination or other proceedings shall be removed from said court except as hereinafter provided; if prior to joining issue in any case and prior to any examination or other proceeding it shall appear by affidavit that the county judge is a material witness or is in any way related to either of the parties, or from prejudice he will not decide impartially in the matter, the county judge shall notify a county judge of an adjoining county or a court commissioner or a justice of the peace in said county of St. Croix not disqualified to hear said examination, trial or other proceeding, whereupon it shall be the duty of the said judge, court commissioner or justice of the peace to forthwith appear at the court room of the said county court and discharge the duties of the judge of said court on the trial of said case or the hearing of said examination or other proceeding as the case may be, with like effect as the said county judge would if not disqualified to act.

(3) Any person so called in and acting for the county judge of St. Croix county shall receive as full compensation therefor \$5 for each day actually and necessarily spent in performance of the duties of the county court of St. Croix county under the additional jurisdiction conferred by this chapter, regardless of how many matters he may hear or determine, and his expenses of travel and meals, and shall be paid therefor out of the treasury of St. Croix county upon certificate of the county judge.

SECTION 10. REMOVAL OF ACTIONS FROM JUSTICE COURT. Whenever any action or proceeding, civil or criminal, shall be removed from any justice of the peace of St. Croix county upon the oath of the defendant, his agent or attorney, if said defendant shall request in writing that such action or proceeding be removed to said county

court, then said justice shall forthwith transmit all papers in such action or proceeding to said county court and said action or proceeding shall be heard, tried and considered in said county court.

SECTION 11. COURT REPORTER. The county judge may appoint a phonographic reporter, skilled in the art of shorthand reporting, for said court and may remove him at pleasure and appoint another in his place. Every person so appointed shall be deemed an officer of said court and shall, before entering upon the duties of his office, take and subscribe the constitutional oath, and file the same duly certified with the clerk of the circuit court of St. Croix county. The reporter shall attend said county court whenever requested by the county judge and perform such duties as the county judge may require. It shall be the duty of said reporter, when requested by the county judge, to take and transcribe all testimony given or taken before said court or the judge thereof in any and all actions, hearings, examinations or proceedings pending or being tried, determined or disposed of before said court or the judge thereof, under this act or under any other law of this state. It shall be the duty of said reporter to assist the county judge in recording, copying, comparing, filing and indexing all records of all actions, hearings, examinations or proceedings before said court or the judge thereof under this act or under any other law of this state. In all matters heard or determined by said county court, under the provisions of this act, the reporter's shorthand notes shall be filed in lieu of the minutes of testimony required by law to be taken by justices of the peace in like proceedings; provided, that in case of appeal in civil actions, said reporter when requested by either party shall file a transcribed copy of his shorthand notes, which shall be returned as the testimony in the case; and the fees for transcribing said testimony, not exceeding five cents per folio, shall be taxed as part of the costs in the circuit court. In criminal cases tried before said county court, which are appealed to the circuit court, a transcribed copy of said reporter's notes shall, upon the request of either the district attorney or the defendant, be certified with the record to said circuit court as the testimony in the case, and, in case of conviction of the defendant in the circuit court, the cost of such transcript, not exceeding five cents per folio, may be taxed with the other taxable costs in the case and shall belong to the county. In preliminary examinations held and conducted before said county court or the judge thereof, when the defendant is held for trial in the circuit court, a transcribed copy of said reporter's notes shall be transmitted with the record to the circuit court as the testimony in the case, and in case the defendant is convicted in the circuit court and costs are taxed against him, then the costs of such transcript shall be taxed in the circuit court with the other taxable costs in the case at the same rate as on return in like cases from other magistrates. Said reporter shall receive the salary fixed by the county board of said county, to be paid monthly out of the county treasury as the salaries of other county officers are paid. In all contested cases, except in preliminary examinations, a reporter's fee at the rate of \$3 per day for the time actually consumed on the trial shall be taxed as part of the costs in the case, and shall be in lieu of the fees allowed by law to justices of the peace for taking testimony. Such reporter's fees and all fees for transcribing testimony in civil actions appealed to the circuit court shall be paid over to said reporter, and shall be in addition to his salary. Section 327.11 of the statutes shall apply to transcribed copies of the testimony and proceedings taken by the reporter under this act in the county court.

SECTION 12. EFFECTIVE DATE. This act shall take effect June 1, 1951.

Approved May 23, 1951.

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