

An ACT for Regulating the Manumission of Slaves. [19 July 1802.]

WHEREAS serious inconvenience arises from a custom (which of late years has been very prevalent,) of bringing slaves from other colonies, and manumitting them in Saint Christopher, augmenting thereby most considerably the number of free negroes and of free persons of colour, and often turning loose upon the public very suspicious and improper characters : And whereas many frauds and abuses are daily practised by the production of false and forged instruments of manumission ; We, therefore, Your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, the chief governor of all Your Majesty's Leeward Charribbee Islands in America, and the council and assembly of the Island of Saint Christopher, do most humbly pray Your Majesty, That it may be enacted, and it is hereby enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice of the chief governor, council and assembly aforesaid, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the first day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and two, every proprietor of any negro or other slave, or the attorney for such proprietor, as may be disposed to manumit any negro or other slave, must apply for permission so to do by petition addressed to the president of the council and the speaker of the assembly, to be laid before the legislature for approbation and consent, on the next ensuing meeting after the receipt thereof, unless such proprietor or attorney for such proprietor, shall lodge in the public treasury of this Island the sum of five hundred pounds current money, as hereinafter is directed by this Act.

2nd. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That unless the proprietor of any negro or other slave, or the attorney for such proprietor, do within the space of thirty days record such permission and manumission in the register's or secretary's office of this Island, the manumission shall be *ipso facto* void, and the person intended thereby to be set free shall remain a slave.

3d. And

3d. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every proprietor of any negro or other slave, or the attorney for such proprietor, on registering the manumission of any negro or other slave, being a native of or who has resided on this Island two years previous to the date of his or her manumission, shall pay into the public treasury the sum of five hundred pounds current money, unless he or she hath obtained the permission of the council and assembly as aforesaid; but if such negro or other slave so to be manumitted, be not a native or a resident as aforesaid, the proprietor of such slave shall pay into the public treasury the sum of one thousand pounds current money, on registering such manumission.

4th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if the secretary or register shall record any letter or instrument of manumission without the treasurer's receipt for the sum or sums hereinbefore directed to be paid be produced to him or the permission of the council and assembly as aforesaid, he shall forfeit to the public the sum or sums which the proprietor is directed by this Act to pay on registering such permission.

5th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no negro or other slave, to whom his or her freedom may after the first day of March next be by the will of his or her master or mistress bequeathed, shall enjoy the same, unless the aforesaid sum of five hundred pounds current money shall have been devised by such testator or testatrix, and be paid by his or her executor or executors, executrix or executrices, into the public treasury of this Island, within six months after the death of such master or mistress.

Provided always, that such executor or executors, executrix or executrices may have leave to apply to the legislature for their consent to such manumission, which being obtained, such negro or other slave shall possess his or her freedom, without paying such sum of five hundred pounds as hereinbefore is directed to be paid into the public treasury of this Island.

And provided further, That in case any proprietor of any negro or other slave or slaves, shall, by any contract in writing or otherwise, dispense with the service of such slave or slaves, and it shall be duly proved before any one justice of the peace that such person or persons has not exercised any right of ownership over such slave or slaves, and maintained such slave or slaves at his or her own expense, within one month, such justice is hereby authorized and empowered to direct the provost marshal of this Island, or his lawful deputy, to sell such negro or other slave or slaves at public vendue, and that the highest bidder shall be the real proprietor of such slave or slaves, and that the purchase money shall be paid into the public treasury of this Island, allowing the said provost marshal or his lawful deputy five per cent. and all necessary expenses.

Dated at Antigua, this nineteenth day of July, in the forty-second year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith; and in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and two.

Read, and passed the Assembly, this twenty-fourth day of April 1802.

*John Garnett*, Speaker.

*James Ward*, Clerk of Assembly.

Read, and passed the Council, this 30th day of June 1802.

*Samuel Tudor*, Clerk of Council.

Passed by the Captain General, this nineteenth day of July one thousand eight hundred and two.