

An ACT to appoint Commissioners for the purpose of obtaining an exact account of the number of the Coloured free People, and number of Negroes within this Government and its Dependencies. [9th January 1805.]

WHEREAS Lord Camden, one of His Majesty's principal secretaries of state, hath, by command of His Majesty, transmitted a letter to his excellency Henry William Bentinck, esquire, governor and commander in chief in and over this Island and its dependencies, requiring "the exact number of negroes imported into and exported from this Island since one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight; and also the number of negroes now in the government, dividing them into classes of male and female, children from one to twelve, youths from twelve to twenty, full grown men and women from twenty to sixty, and the aged; also an account of the total number of coloured free people." In order therefore to comply as effectually and correctly as possible with the above request, and that henceforth the same account may be taken annually in the first month of every year, We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, Henry William Bentinck, esquire, captain general and governor in chief in and over the Islands of Saint Vincent, Bequia, and such other the Islands, commonly called The Grenadines, as lie to the northward of Carriacou in America, and the council and assembly of the same, have enacted; and be it and it is hereby enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the commissioners hereinafter named for the purpose of carrying the intention of this Act into effect, shall, within fifteen days after the publication of this Act, issue this warrant to one or more of the constables for the Island, parish or town, which such commissioners represent in the house of assembly, requiring all owners, renters, or possessors of slaves within such Island, parish or town, to appear before them at a certain time and place within the Island, or town or parish therein to be specified, such time not to exceed ten days from the date of such warrant, and to be served at least five days before the time when such appearance shall be required, then and there to make a return in writing upon oath of the number of negroes belonging to or in the possession of such owners, renters or possessors, distinguishing in such return the number of males and females separately, from one year old to twelve years old; males and females separately, from twelve years old to twenty years old; males and females separately, from twenty years old to sixty years old; and males and females separately, from sixty years old and upwards; and any person refusing or neglecting to comply with the warrant, shall upon the oath of any one commissioner, before any one of His Majesty's justices of the peace, forfeit the sum of twenty pounds current money, for every five days he shall refuse or neglect to make his returns, to be recovered by warrant under the hand and seal of such justice, directed to any constable of the said parish.

Preamble.

Clause I.
Instructions to
Commissioners for
taking account of
negroes.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the commissioners hereinafter named, shall within fifteen days after the publication of this Act, issue their warrant to one or more constable or constables within the parish, town or island,

Clause II.
Instructions to
Commissioners for
taking account of
free, black or
coloured people.

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which they represent in the House of Assembly, requiring all free, black and coloured people to appear before them at a certain time and place within the parish, town or island therein to be specified, such time not to exceed ten days from the date of the said warrant, and to be served five days before the time such appearance shall be required, then and there to answer upon oath such questions as shall be tendered to them respecting their ages, occupation and means of living, and of their families, their and each of their ages and sexes respectively, that their number may be fully ascertained; and all free, black and coloured people being duly summoned, who shall refuse or neglect to appear before the said commissioners, and give in their names, and answer all such questions as shall be tendered them as aforesaid, shall be liable and subject to be apprehended by warrant from any magistrate, directed to any constable, and to be by such magistrate, upon complaint of any one of the said commissioners, committed to the common gaol for any time not exceeding fifteen days, and shall also be subject to a fine of five pounds current money, to be levied by warrant under the hand and seal of any magistrate, directed to any constable, upon the goods and chattels of such free, black or coloured person so refusing or neglecting as aforesaid.

Clause III.
Respecting persons
on whom warrant
to appear may not
have been served.

And whereas it may happen that free, black, or coloured persons may conceal themselves, or may not be found by a constable to serve a warrant, and their place of residence may be unknown; BE it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all free, black, or coloured persons, not served with a warrant as aforesaid, shall within fifteen days after the publication of this Act, give in their his or her name to the commissioners of the parish, town or island in which such free, black or coloured person or persons reside, and shall then and there, or at any other time specified and directed by such commissioners, answer upon oath all such questions as aforesaid, under the like penalties, in case of refusal or neglect.

Clause IV.
Security for good
behaviour to be
given.

And whereas by an Act, commonly called The Alien Act, no free, black or coloured person can resort to or reside in this government, without entering into certain securities therein specified, within ten days after granting said permission; BE it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all persons whatsoever renting lands, messuages or tenements to free, black or coloured people, shall within fifteen days after the publication of this Act, give in the names, ages and sexes of their respective tenants, and the number of the families of such their tenants, to the commissioners of the parish, town or island in which such lands, tenements or messuages lie, and shall enter into security for their good and orderly behaviour; and shall also give notice to any one of the commissioners of the removal of any of the before-mentioned tenants, under the penalty of twenty pounds, to be levied as hereinbefore directed; and every magistrate granting permission of residence upon security given, according to the above-mentioned Act, shall give unto the Commissioners, or any one of them, of the parish, town or island, a copy of the permission granted.

Clause V.
Commissioners ap-
pointed.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the representatives in the house of assembly for the different parishes in this Island, or any two of them, and the representatives and town wardens for the Town of Kingstown, and the representatives for the Grenadines, shall be commissioners for carrying this Act into effect; and the said commissioners are hereby required, within seven days after taking the returns, to deliver the same to the clerk of the house of assembly, who shall make one general return of the same, to be by him laid before the said house at their first meeting, after one copy thereof shall be delivered to his excellency the governor, for the purpose of being transmitted to His Majesty's principal secretary of state for this department, and another to be lodged in the secretary's office of this Island.

Instructions to
them.

Clause VI.
Provides for like
returns being made
every year.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the returns herein directed to be taken and made, shall in like manner and form (and the same proceedings be had,) under the same penalties and forfeitures to all intents and purposes, be taken and made in the first month of each and every succeeding year; and that all free, black or coloured persons coming within the meaning and disposition of the third clause of this Act, shall be and appear before the commissioners of the town, or parish, or island in which they reside, on some day between the fifth and tenth days of January in every year, and the commissioners shall have the same powers as are vested in them by the said third clause, or any other clause of the said Act.

533

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all fines and forfeitures incurred by virtue of this Act, shall be to His Majesty, his heirs and successors, and shall be paid into the treasury of this Island, for the public uses of the government thereof.

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Clause VII.
Disposing of Fines.

Dated in Kingstown, the ninth day of January, in the forty-fifth 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 so forth; and in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five.

William John Struth, Speaker.

Passed the Assembly, the ninth day of January one thousand eight hundred and five.

Herbert P. Cox, Clerk of the Assembly.

Passed the Council, this ninth day of January one thousand eight hundred and five.

Michael Reilly, Dep. Clerk of the Council.

Assented to by His Excellency the Governor in Chief, this tenth day of January one thousand eight hundred and five.

Michael Reilly, Dep. Clerk of the Council.

Henry William Bentinck.

Duly published in Kingstown, the eleventh day of January one thousand eight hundred and five, and in the forty-fifth year of His Majesty's reign.

Wm. Alexander, Provost Marshal.