

CHAPTER DCCXV.

AN ACT FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS PROVINCE
AND PAYMENT OF PUBLIC DEBTS.

Whereas it would be extremely distressing to the people of this province, laboring under a heavy burden of taxes for sinking the bills of credit emitted during the last war and granted to His Majesty for the protection of His American dominions, to impose on them an additional rate or tax to be immediately levied on their real and personal estates:

And whereas it is necessary to raise a sum for supporting the honor of government, discharging its debts and incidental expenses, and preserving the public credit:

We the representatives of the freemen of the said province do therefore pray that it may be enacted:

[Section I.] And be it enacted by the Honorable John Penn, Esquire, Governor and Commander in Chief of the Province of Pennsylvania, by and with the consent and advice of the representatives of the freemen of the said Province in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, That bills of credit to the value of twenty-two thousand pounds shall be prepared and printed within two months next after the passing of this act on good, strong paper under the care and direction of George Gray, Michael Hillegas, Joseph Parker and Isaac Pearson, Esquires, or any three of them, the charges whereof shall be paid by the provincial treasurer out of the moneys arising or to arise by the excise on spirituous liquors directed to be levied and paid in virtue of the act, entitled "An act for the support of the government of this province, making the excise on wine, rum, brandy and other spirits more equal, and preventing frauds in the collecting and paying the said excise,"¹ passed in the twelfth year of His present Majesty's reign, which bills of credit shall be made and prepared in the manner and form following, viz.:

¹ Passed March 21, 1772, Chapter 606.

..... according to an act of general assembly of Pennsylvania passed in the fifteenth year of the reign of His Majesty George the Third. Dated the twenty-fifth day of October, Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five.



And the said bills shall have such like escutcheons as in the margin hereof, with such other devices as the said George Gray, Michael Hillegas, Joseph Parker and Isaac Pearson shall think proper, as well to prevent counterfeits as to distinguish their several and respective denominations, each of which bills shall be of the several and respective denominations following and no other: That is to say,

Six thousand of the same bills, the sum of twenty shillings in each of them.

Six thousand of the same bills, the sum of fifteen shillings in each of them.

Six thousand of the same bills, the sum of ten shillings in each of them.

Six thousand of the same bills, the sum of five shillings in each of them.

Fifteen thousand eight hundred and forty-nine of the same bills, the sum of two shillings and six pence in each of them.

Fifteen thousand eight hundred and forty-nine of the same bills, the sum of two shillings in each of them.

Fifteen thousand eight hundred and forty-nine of the same bills, the sum of one shilling and six pence in each of them.

Fifteen thousand eight hundred and forty-nine of the same bills, the sum of one shilling in each of them.

Fifteen thousand eight hundred and forty-nine of the same bills, the sum of nine pence in each of them.

Fifteen thousand eight hundred and fifty of the same bills, the sum of six pence in each of them.

Fifteen thousand eight hundred and forty-nine of the same bills, the sum of four pence in each of them.

Fifteen thousand eight hundred [and forty-nine] of the same bills, the sum of three pence in each of them.

And the said George Gray, Michael Hillegas, Joseph Parker

and Isaac Pearson shall use their best care, attention and diligence during the printing of the said bills that the number and amount thereof according to the respective denominations aforesaid be not exceeded nor any clandestine or fraudulent practice used by the printer, his servants or others concerned therein.

And for perfecting the said bills according to the true intent and meaning of this act:

[Section II.] Be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all and every of the said bills the denominations whereof shall be one shilling and upwards shall be signed by any three of the persons hereinafter mentioned, and that every of the said bills the denominations whereof shall be under one shilling shall be signed by any one of the persons hereinafter mentioned: That is to say, by Thomas Shoemaker, Charles Jarvis, Philip Kinsey, John Knowles, Abel Evans, John Warder, Isaac Howell, Richard Humphreys, Thomas Tilbury, Henry Hale Graham, Adam Grubb and Francis Johnston, who are hereby nominated and appointed to be signers of the said bills, and shall before they receive or sign any of them take an oath or affirmation to the effect following, viz.:

That they shall well and truly sign and number all the bills that shall come to their hands for that purpose by the direction of this act, and the same so signed and numbered will deliver or cause to be delivered unto the said George Gray, Michael Hillegas, Joseph Parker and Isaac Pearson or any three of them pursuant to the direction of this act.

And for avoiding the danger of embezzlement or misapplication of the said bills of credit:

[Section III.] Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the said George Gray, Michael Hillegas, Joseph Parker and Isaac Pearson or any three of them after the said bills shall be printed shall deliver them to the signers aforesaid to be signed and numbered by parcels, for which the said signers or some of them shall give their receipt: That is to say, two thousand pounds value in the said bills to them at one time and so from time to time until all the said bills of credit shall be signed and numbered in such manner that not more than the value of two thousand pounds shall remain in such signers'

hands at any one time, of all which said bills of credit so delivered to be signed a true account shall be kept by the signers, who upon their redelivery of each or any parcel of the said bills by them signed and numbered shall take the receipt of the said George Gray, Michael Hillegas, Joseph Parker and Isaac Pearson or any three of them to charge them before any committee of assembly to be appointed for that purpose.

And each of the said signers shall receive ten shillings for every thousand of the said bills by them signed and numbered, and each of the said George Gray, Michael Hillegas, Joseph Parker and Isaac Pearson shall have and receive for their trouble the sum of ten shillings per diem, and the said treasurer for paying and receiving the said bills of credit shall have and receive five shillings for every hundred pounds and no more, to be paid and discharged by the provincial treasurer out of the moneys arising or to arise by the excise on spirituous liquors by virtue of the hereinbefore mentioned act passed in the twelfth year of His present Majesty's reign.

[Section IV.] And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That as soon as the said bills shall be signed, numbered and perfected the said George Gray, Michael Hillegas, Joseph Parker and Isaac Pearson or any three of them shall deliver them to the provincial treasurer and take his receipt or receipts for the same, who shall therewith pay off and discharge all such drafts and certificates as have been heretofore made by order of assembly. And if any overplus shall remain after payment of the said drafts and certificates, such overplus shall be disposed of by act of general assembly.

[Section V.] And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person or persons shall presume to counterfeit any of the said bills of credit made and issued by virtue of this act by printing or procuring the same to be printed in the likeness or similitude of the said bills of credit, or if any person or persons shall forge the name or names of the signers of the said true bills of credit to such counterfeit bills, whether the counterfeiting of the said bills [of credit] or names be done within this province or elsewhere, or shall utter such bills knowing them to be counterfeited as aforesaid, and being there-

of legally convicted by confession, standing mute or by the verdict of twelve men in any court of oyer and terminer within this province, he, she or they shall suffer death without benefit of clergy, and the discoverer or informer shall have as an encouragement to his discovery the sum of fifty pounds of the value of the goods and chattels, lands and tenements, of the person or persons convicted, and if no such goods and chattels, lands, tenements, can be found, the sum of ten pounds, to be paid by the provincial treasurer. And if any person or persons shall counterfeit any of the said bills of credit by altering the denomination thereof with design to increase the value of the said bills or shall utter such bills knowing them to be so counterfeited or altered and shall thereof be legally convicted in any court of quarter sessions of the peace within this province, every such person and persons shall be sentenced to the pillory, have both of his or her ears cut off and nailed to the pillory, and be publicly whipped on his or her bare back with thirty-nine lashes well laid on. And moreover every such offender shall forfeit the sum of one hundred pounds to be levied on his or her lands, tenements, goods and chattels, one-half thereof to the use of the governor and the other half to the discoverer, and the offender shall pay to the party grieved double the value of the damages thereby sustained, together with the costs and charges of the prosecution; and in case the offender shall not have sufficient to satisfy such discoverer for his or her damages and pay the forfeiture aforesaid he or she shall be sold for any term not exceeding seven years to make such satisfaction, and in such case the said discoverer shall be paid by the provincial treasurer the sum of ten pounds, and every such counterfeit bill shall be delivered to the said treasurer to be made use of upon the trial of the person accused or suspected and afterwards to be burnt, sunk and destroyed in the presence of a committee of assembly.

And whereas by a certain act of general assembly passed in the third year of the reign of His present Majesty, entitled "An act for granting to His Majesty the sum of twenty-four thousand pounds for the defense and protection of this province and for other purposes therein mentioned,"¹ so much of a certain

¹ Passed October 22, 1763, Chapter 505.

other act of general assembly passed in the thirtieth year of [the reign of] His late Majesty George the Second, entitled "An act for striking the sum of thirty thousand pounds in bills of credit and giving the same to the King's use and for providing a fund to sink the bills so to be emitted by laying an excise upon wine, rum, brandy and other spirits,"¹ as relates to the raising, levying, collecting and paying the excise upon wine, rum, brandy and other spirits was extended and continued from the time limited in and by the same act for and during the term of three years and from thence to the end of the next sitting of assembly in order to secure and assure the disposition and application of the sum of seven thousand pounds to and for the protection of the city of Philadelphia (to and for which purpose the same was by law granted to His Majesty) when it should become necessary:

And whereas by another act of general assembly passed in the seventh year of His Majesty's reign, entitled "An act for raising the sum of twenty thousand pounds for the support of the government of this province and payment of the public debts,"² so much of the said act, entitled "An act for striking the sum of thirty thousand pounds in bills of credit,"¹ &c., as relates to the raising, levying, collecting and paying the excise upon wine, rum, brandy and other spirits was continued and extended from the time limited in and by the said herein last recited act for and during the further term of four years and from thence to the end of the next sitting of assembly in order to sink the bills of credit by the same act emitted:

And whereas by another act of general assembly passed in the eighth year of His present Majesty's reign, entitled "An act for raising and applying the sum of three thousand pounds, towards removing the present discontent of the Indians, regaining their friendship, and for other purposes there mentioned,"³ so much of the said act, entitled "An act for striking the sum of thirty thousand pounds in bills of credit,"¹ &c., as relates to the

¹ Passed September 21, 1756, Chapter 412.

² Passed May 20, 1767, Chapter 559.

³ Passed February 17, 1768, Chapter 571.

raising, levying and collecting the excise upon wine, rum, brandy and other spirituous liquors was continued and extended from the time limited in and by the hereinbefore last recited act for and during the further term of one year and from thence to the end of the next sitting of assembly in order to sink the bills of credit appropriated and applied to the uses and purposes therein mentioned:

And whereas by one other act of general assembly passed in the ninth year of His present Majesty's reign, entitled "An act for raising the sum of sixteen thousand pounds for the support of the government of this province and payment of the public debts and other purposes therein mentioned,"¹ so much of the said act, entitled "An act for striking the sum of thirty thousand pounds in bills of credit," &c.,² as relates to the raising, levying and collecting the said excise upon wine, rum, brandy and other spirits was continued and extended from the time limited in and by the said last recited act for and during the further term of four years and from thence to the end of the next sitting of assembly for sinking of credit by the same act emitted:

And where as by the act of general assembly hereinbefore first mentioned passed in the twelfth year of His present Majesty's reign, entitled "An act for the support of the government of this province, making the excise upon wine, rum, brandy and other spirits more equal and preventing frauds in the collecting and paying the said excise,"³ so much of the said act, entitled "An act for striking the sum of thirty thousand pounds in bills of credit," &c.,² as relates to the raising, levying and collecting the said excise upon wine, rum, brandy and other spirits was altered and amended and a new mode for raising, levying and collecting the same was directed, and the same act continued and extended for the space of ten years from the tenth day of April, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two, and until all the purposes in the same act mentioned should be fully answered and completed:

And whereas it is expedient that the bills of credit directed

¹ Passed February 18, 1769, Chapter 580.

² Passed September 21, 1756, Chapter 412.

³ Passed March 21, 1772, Chapter 656.

to be hereby made and emitted should be paid off and discharged as soon as conveniently may be:

[Section VI.] Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, That when all the bills of credit that have been heretofore emitted by virtue of the said recited acts shall be paid off and discharged, then and immediately after the said provincial treasurer shall and he is hereby enjoined and required out of the moneys which shall be in his hands arising from the said excise by virtue of the said last recited act from time to time to pay off and discharge all and every the bills of credit made and emitted in and by virtue hereof; and shall upon such payment receive the same bills of their respective bearers and shall yearly as they come to his hands deliver over the same to such committees of assembly as shall be annually appointed to settle the public accounts to be by them burnt, sunk and destroyed.

[Section VII.] Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if the said rates, duties and sums of moneys by the hereinbefore recited act, entitled "An act for the support of the government of this province, making the excise on wine, rum, brandy and other spirits more equal and preventing frauds in the collecting and paying the said excise,"¹ directed to be raised, levied and collected during the continuance of the same act shall not be sufficient to pay off and discharge the bills of credit hereby directed to be emitted together with all such other bills of credit as have been heretofore emitted by the said recited acts for continuing the excise on the said liquors and the other purposes in this and the said acts mentioned, in such case, this act and the said last recited act and every article, clause, matter and thing therein contained shall be and is hereby declared to be in full force and virtue until all the purposes aforesaid shall be fully answered and [completed;] and if the said rates and sums of money shall produce more than sufficient for the purposes aforesaid, the overplus shall remain in the hands of the provincial treasurer, to be disposed of by act of general [assembly.]

¹ Passed March 21, 1772, Chapter 606.

Passed September 30, 1775. Probably not submitted to the Crown for action. See Appendix XXXII, and the notes to the Acts of Assembly passed March 5, 1725-26, Chapter 289; March 21, 1772, Chapter 656; and the Acts of Assembly passed May 25, 1778, Chapter 800; March 15, 1779, Chapter 825; March 17, 1780, Chapter 897; April 6, 1781, Chapter 938; March 19, 1783, Chapter 1016; September 21, 1791, Chapter 1582.