

## CHAPTER DCCLXXIX.

## AN ACT TO PREVENT FORESTALLING AND REGRATING AND TO ENCOURAGE FAIR DEALING.

(Section I, P. L.) Whereas during the present interruption of commerce and the great demand for many necessary articles occasioned by the war the prices of goods and merchandise are greatly enhanced by the practices and combinations of evil and designing men to the great oppression of the poor and injury of the commonwealth:

For remedy whereof:

[Section I.] (Section II, P. L.) Be it enacted, and it is hereby enacted by the Representatives of the Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly met, [and] by the authority of the same, That from and after the publication of this act no person or persons within this commonwealth shall purchase (except in small quantities for their own use and the consumption of their families or tradesmen and artificers for carrying on the business of their trades) any of the following articles, to-wit: wine, rum, whiskey, molasses, sugar, tea, coffee, salt, leather, deer-skins, furs, wool, flax [cotton] cotton and wool cards, butter, cheese, iron-castings, wire, nail rods, bar iron, steel, hemp, linen, tow or woolen clothes, ready-made clothes, stockings, shoes, wheat, rye, Indian corn, barley, oats, spelts, beans, peas, meal or flour of any kind, beef, pork, mutton, cider, beer, tobacco, neat cattle, sheep, hogs or other live stock, except to keep or fatten on their own farms, or any other goods, wares or merchandise brought or to be brought into this state until such person or persons shall first obtain a permit so to do signed by one of the persons hereinafter appointed respectively, who are hereby enjoined not to grant such permit to any person or persons but such as are known to be of good character for probity and public spirit and known friends to the freedom and independence of the American states, and who shall have taken the

oath or affirmation of abjuration and allegiance to this state prescribed by law; and if any person or persons so permitted shall misbehave in the said business by selling any articles at an unreasonable profit or refusing to sell them at a reasonable profit for bills of credit of this state or bills of the United States, the commissioners for said counties respectively or a majority of them who have so as aforesaid granted such permit shall and may by writing under their hands revoke the permit so granted, and every person so misbehaving in purchasing or refusing to sell as aforesaid shall upon being legally convicted thereof before any court of quarter sessions in this state forfeit all the goods, wares or merchandise so bought and refused for sale or the value thereof one moiety to the use of the informer and the other moiety for the use of the state, to be prosecuted and recovered with costs of suit by the commissioners or any one of them appointed to grant such permit in the county where the offense is committed.

[Section II.] (Section III, P. L.) And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no person or persons shall sell within this commonwealth any of the articles aforesaid which he hath engrossed or hath now in his possession or which he may hereafter purchase and bring in from any of the neighboring states without first obtaining a permit so to do from the said commissioners or one of them hereinafter mentioned on penalty of forfeiting double the value of every article so sold or of suffering imprisonment for any time not exceeding three months, according as the prosecution shall be first begun for the said penalty or by indictment for the offense and to prevent any fraud in the sale of the said articles which shall be sold by any such purchaser or engrosser who has any of the said articles in his [or her] possession, he or she shall before any [such] permit be given to him or her, make out a true list or inventory of all such articles which he or she has in possession and deliver the same on oath or affirmation to some one of the commissioners hereby authorized to grant such permit.

Provided nevertheless, That any person who has on hand or may hereafter get into his or her possession any of the goods, wares or merchandise above enumerated and shall neglect or

refuse to deliver an inventory as aforesaid to some one commissioner of the county and apply for a permit to sell them, agreeable to the intention of this act, he, she or they so offending shall forfeit all such goods, wares or merchandise or the value thereof, to be prosecuted, recovered and applied as aforesaid forfeiture is directed to be prosecuted, recovered and applied.

(Section IV, P. L.) And whereas many persons under pretense of being employed to purchase for the army have heretofore purchased many of the articles enumerated in this act in order to engross and sell them again at exorbitant prices:

[Section III.] Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no commissary or assistant commissary or other person or persons whatsoever authorized to purchase supplies for the army or navy of the United States shall purchase any of the aforesaid articles in this state until he hath produced his appointment to and obtained a certificate from one of the said commissioners in this state and any person or persons who shall purchase any of the articles aforesaid under pretense that they are for the use of the army or navy who is not properly authorized as aforesaid shall forfeit treble the value of the article so purchased and be liable to imprisonment at the discretion of the court before whom the conviction shall be, not exceeding three months.

[Section IV.] (Section V, P. L.) And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the following persons be and they are hereby appointed commissioners for the purposes aforesaid, to-wit: John Moore, William Antis and Andrew Knox, Esquires, for the county of Philadelphia; Gerardus Wynkoop, Thomas Dyer and George Wykart, Esquires, for the county of Bucks; George Irwin, Thomas Cheney and Philip Scott, Esquires, for the county of Chester; Morris Erwin, Christopher Marshall and Timothy Green, Esquires, for the county of Lancaster; Archibald McLean, David Watson and Benjamin Leden, Esquires, for the county of York; John Creigh, John Agnew and George Matthews, Esquires, for the county of Cumberland; Peter Spiker, Jacob Shoemaker and Paul Groffcoop, Esquires, for the county of Berks; Robert Levers, Samuel Ray and William McNair, Esquires, for the county of Northampton; William Packer,

Thomas Paxton and Cornelius McCauley, Esquires, for [the county of] Bedford; Samuel Allen, John Ouran and Mordecai McKinney, Esquires, for the county of Northumberland, and Edward Cook, Charles Foreman and John Moore, Esquires, for the county of Westmoreland; and the said commissioners respectively or any of them are hereby authorized and empowered to grant such permit agreeable to the tenor of this act, which permit shall be and continue in force, (unless sooner revoked) for the space of one year next following and no longer for which permit the person applying shall pay the sum of ten shillings to the commissioners for their trouble.

[Section V] (Section VI, P. L.) And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person or persons shall think him or themselves aggrieved by the judgment of said commissioners or any of them in any matter or thing done or to be done by virtue of this act, that it shall and may be lawful for such person or persons to appeal to the supreme executive council of this state or to the justices of the peace for the said county at their court of quarter sessions, whose judgment thereon shall be final and decisive.

[Section VI] (Section VII, P. L.) And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no person or persons within this state shall be permitted to purchase any whiskey or species of clothing manufactured or unmanufactured necessary for the use of the army until he gives the commissioners or some one of them of the county where he, she or they reside such security or assurance as they may judge necessary that he, she or they will not remove or cause to be removed the articles aforesaid, out of this state.

Passed January 2, 1778. See the two Acts of Assembly passed April 1, 1778, Chapters 795, 797; May 25, 1778, Chapter 799; September 9, 1778, Chapter 812; September 10, 1778, Chapter 816; November 27, 1778, Chapter 819; March 16, 1779, Chapter 827; April 3, 1779, Chapter 841; April 5, 1779, Chapter 845; October 6, 1779, Chapter 856; October 8, 1779, Chapter 859; February 28, 1780, Chapter 876; (repealed by the Act of Assembly passed) March 22, 1780, Chapter 904.