

ACTS

PASSED AT THE SESSION BEGUN AND HELD AT
WATERTOWN, ON THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF MAY,
A. D. 1776.

CHAPTER 1.

AN ACT FOR MAKING AND EMITTING OF BILLS OF PUBLIC CREDIT.

WHEREAS the exigencies of this colony require a new emission of bills of public credit, to discharge the public debts, — Preamble.

Be it therefore enacted by the Council and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same,

[SECT. 1.] That there be forthwith printed a certain number of bills of credit, on this colony, to the amount of the sum of one hundred thousand pounds, lawful money, of the following denominations; viz^d., of threepence, of fourpence, of fivepence, of sixpence, of ninepence, of tenpence, of one shilling, of one shilling and threepence, of one shilling and eightpence, of two shillings and fourpence, of two shillings and sixpence, of three shillings and sixpence, of four shillings, of four shillings and fourpence, of five shillings, of five shillings and fourpence, of six shillings, of twelve shillings, of eighteen shillings, of twenty-four shillings, of thirty shillings, of thirty-six shillings, of forty-two shillings, and of forty-eight shillings; and to be eight thousand of each denomination, and no more: one half of the number of each denomination to be of the tenor and form following; viz^d., — Bills of several denominations, to be emitted.

Colony of the } (No.) June 18[th], 1776.
Massachusetts Bay. }

This bill intitles the bearer to receive tenpence, L.M., out of the treasury by the 18th June, 1778, and shall be received for that sum in all payments agreeable to an act of the assembly of said colony.

Forms of the bills.

} Committee.

—and so, *mutatis mutandis*, for a greater or less sum; and the other half of each denomination to be of the tenor and form following; viz^d., —

Colony of the } (No.) June 18[th], 1776.
Massachusetts Bay. } THREE DOLLARS

This bill entitles the bearer to receive eighteen shillings, L. M., out of the treasury by the 18th of June, 1779; and shall be received for that sum in all payments agreeable to an act of the assembly of said colony.

} Committee.

—and so, *mutatis mutandis*, for a greater or less sum; and that, on the backs of each of said bills amounting to the value of a dollar and upwards, shall be printed the value of the bill.

[SECT. 2.] Which bills shall be paid and received in the public treasury, and in all payments in this colony, without any abatement or discount, upon any pretence whatever, under the penalty and forfeiture of treble the value of the bill or bills so passed, to be forfeited and paid by the receiver; which penalty may be recovered by action of debt, complaint or indictment, in any court proper to try the same, in the county in this colony, where the offence shall be committed.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,

Committee to
number and
sign the bills;

[SECT. 3.] That the committee hereafter to be appointed by this court, to authenticate, by signing and numbering, all the bills aforesaid, be, and they hereby are, directed and empowered to take care, and make effectual provis[s]ion, as soon as may be, to cause the said bills, of the several denominations aforesaid, to be printed and authenticated to the amount of the said sum of one hundred thousand pounds, and no more; and to deliver the same to the treasurer and receiver-general of this colony, taking his receipt for the same; and the said committee shall be under oath for the faithful management of the bus[s]iness aforesaid, and the trust reposed in them; they to be rewarded for their service as this court shall determine.

—to be sworn.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,

Treasurer
empowered to
issue forth said
bills.

[SECT. 4.] That the treasurer be, and he hereby is, ordered and empowered to issue forth and emit the said bills, towards payment of the public debts of this colony already contracted, and the further growing charge for the defence thereof; for payment of grants, salaries and allowances made, or that may hereafter be made, by the great and general court, for the support of the government of this colony, and answering the incident and contingent charges thereof; according to such draughts as, from time to time, shall be made upon him, by warrant or order of the council; and the said bills shall pass out of the treasury, and shall be taken and accepted, in all payments, at the rate therein expressed.

And whereas it is necessary to give a currency to this emission of bills, and to support the faith and credit of this colony, that there should be suitable provis[s]ion made for calling in and paying the same; therefore, —

Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,

Tax to be levied
on polls and
estates for the
calling in and
paying the
same.

[SECT. 5.] That there be and hereby is granted a tax of one hundred thousand pounds, to be levied on polls, and estates both real and personal, within this colony, in manner following; that is to say, fifty thousand[s] pounds, part of the one hundred thousand pounds aforesaid, according to such rules, and such proportion in the several towns and other places within this colony, as shall be agreed upon and ordered by the general court or assembly at their session in May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, to be paid into the public treasury on or before the last day of March next after; and the further sum of fifty thousand pounds, part of the one hundred [hundred] thousand pounds aforesaid, according[s] to such rules, and in such proportions on the several towns and other places aforesaid, as shall be agreed upon and ordered by the general court at their session in May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight, and to be paid into the public treasury on or before the last day of March next after.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,

Bills of credit of
the United
Colonies, to be
received.

[SECT. 6.] That no bills of public credit shall be received in payment of the tax before mentioned, excepting bills of credit of the United Colonies established by the American Congress, and the bills of this government.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,

[SECT. 7.] That if the general court, at their session in May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, or at their session in May, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-eight, and some time before the [the] twentieth day of August in each year, shall not agree and conclude upon an act apportioning the sums which by this act are engaged to be, in each of said years, assessed and levied, that then and in such case each town and other places in this colony shall pay, by a tax to be levied on the polls, and estates both real and personal, within their limits, the same proportion of the said sums as the said towns and other places were taxed by the general court in the tax act then last preceeding.

Towns' and other places' apportionment of the tax.

[SECT. 8.] And the colony treasurer is hereby fully empowered and directed, some time in the month of August, in each of the years aforesaid, to issue and send forth his warrants, directed to the selectmen or assessors of each town within this colony, or to some suitable person or persons in such place or places as are not incorporated, requiring them to assess the polls, and estates both real and personal, within their several towns and other places, for their respective parts and proportions of the sums before directed and engaged to be assessed, to be paid into the treasury, at the aforementioned times; and the assessors, as also persons assessed, shall observe, be governed by, and subject to, all such rules and directions as have been given in the last preceeding tax act,

Colony treasurer empowered to issue forth his warrants to the selectmen of each town, to assess, &c.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,

[SECT. 9.] That the bills of credit to be emitted by this act, and also all bills of credit which are established by the American Congress, shall be received in all payments within this colony; and a tender of the same may be pleaded in bar to any action brought for the recovery of any money, or species of money, due by deed or simple contract, or in any way and manner whatever.

Bills established by the American Congress, to be received in payments.

Be it further enacted,

[SECT. 10.] That all the bills aforesaid amounting to the sum of six shillings and upwards, shall be signed by any two of the committee aforesaid, and all the aforesaid bills under six shillings shall be signed by any one of said committee. [Passed June 21.]

Bills of six shillings, &c., to be signed by two of the committee.

CHAPTER 2.

AN ACT IN ADDITION TO AN ACT, MADE IN THE LAST SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, INTITLED "AN ACT FOR ALTERING THE STILE OF WRITS, PROCESSES, AND ALL LAW PROCEEDINGS, WITHIN THIS COLONY, AND FOR DIRECTING HOW RECOGNIZANCES TO THE USE OF THE GOVERNMENT, SHALL, FOR THE FUTURE, BE TAKEN AND PROSECUTED."*

WHEREAS, in and by said act no provision is made to enable the council of this colony of Massachusetts Bay to make conformable to the stile and date by the said act required, any commissions issued by the major part of the council of the said colony before the nine-

Preamble.
1775-76, chap. 22.

* This is only a part of the title, *q. v.*