

At the General Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia, begun and holden at Halifax, on the Twentieth day of February 1800, and thence continued by several Prorogations to the Ninth day of June, 1801, in the Forty-first 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, &c. being the Second Session of the Eighth General Assembly, convened in the said Province. From Richard John Uniacke, The Statutes at Large passed in the General Assembly held in His Majesty's Province of Nova Scotia: A complete index and abridgement of the whole. John Howe and Son, 1805.

41 George III – Chapter 6

An Act for the better management and relief of the Poor of Halifax.

Be it enacted, by the Lieutenant-Governor, Council and Assembly, that, from and after the first day of January next, Richard John Uniacke, William Forsyth, Lawrence Hartshorne, John George Pyke, William Taylor, Charles Morris Jun., Charles Hill, William Sabatier, James Clarke, William Lyon, John Lawson, and James Fraser, shall be commissioners for the superintendence, relief and management, of the poor of the town and peninsula of Halifax, and for the appropriation and disposal of the funds which are, or may be made, applicable to their support and maintenance: which commissioners shall have, and may exercise, all the rights, powers and authorities, of every nature whatsoever, heretofore granted by law to, and vested in, the overseers of the poor, and may act, in the immediate management and government of the poor by rotation, each one month, as may be agreed on from time to time by them; and in case of the death, removal, or refusal to serve, of any of the said commissioners, his or their places to be filled up by the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, or Commander in Chief for the time being, out of such person or persons as may be nominated and recommended for that purpose by the major part of the remaining commissioners, in writing under their hands.

II. And be it also enacted, that the acting commissioner, for the time being, shall have the immediate superintendence of the poor-house, and shall take care to have the food, allotted for the paupers, regularly served; and the beds, bedding and cloathing, kept in clean order; and shall direct what food shall be served to them, and also at what hours; and shall and may direct or order every pauper, capable of any work or labour, to be employed in such manner, and at such hours of the day, as he may think best, and may excuse from work such as he may find unfit, or too infirm therefor; and may order, and direct such who, being able, shall refuse to work, or who shall misbehave, to be punished by solitary confinement, or by stoppage of their allowance of food, until they become obedient, or by such other ways and means as the said commissioners may direct and order for the general government of the house and paupers.

III. Be it also enacted, that the earnings of the paupers shall be fairly rated by the commissioners, and a regular account thereof kept, so that the earning of each may be known and ascertained, and the surplus thereof, after deducting the expence of cloathing

and food furnished to such pauper, shall be accounted for, and paid, to the pauper who may have earned it, without any defalcation or abatement whatever: and whoever shall misapply or embezzle the poor funds shall be liable to pay treble damages, with full costs of suit, to the party injured thereby. Provided always, that the commissioners, or the major part thereof, may direct such surplus to be laid out and expended in such articles of cloathing, or other necessaries, as the pauper may be in want of: spirits, or strong drink, excepted.

IV. And be it also enacted, that no commissioner, keeper of the house, or other person employed under them, or either of them, shall derive or receive any share or interest in the earnings of the paupers, on pain of immediate dismissal from office, and absolute disqualification therefor, and shall be also liable to repay double the sum so taken from the paupers, to be recovered by information or action at the suit of the pauper, or of a major part of the commissioners in this or her behalf.

V. And be it also enacted, that no rum, or other distilled spirituous liquors, shall be allowed to the paupers, or be bought, sold or drank, within the house and premises appropriated to the use of the poor, that the paupers shall be fed on soups, barley broth, stewed meat, wheaten rye, oaten and Indian, bread, or cakes or puddings, and also on fish and vegetables, in such way and manner as the acting commissioner may, from time to time, direct: and an account be kept of the cost of such meal, that the earnings of the paupers may be taxed accordingly.

VI. Be it also enacted, that the cloathing for the paupers, in winter, shall be a warm, but coarse, jacket and trowsers for each male, and a jacket and petticoat for each female, and also a strong cotton shirt or shift, with yarn stockings and leather buskins.

VII. Be it also enacted, that the men and boys shall be employed daily in picking oakum or rasping wood, or in such trades as can be taught and followed in the house, and the women and girls in sewing, mending, or making cloaths, spinning or carding, knitting or weaving, or in such menial services about the house, as the acting commissioner may, from time to time, direct.

VIII. Be it also enacted, that the commissioners, or the major part of them, shall have power to apprentice or bind out the poor boys or girls under their charge, by indenture, until they arrive at age, to any person or persons of good repute within the province, on such terms and conditions as they may judge best.

IX. And be it further enacted, that the commissioners, or the major part of them, shall have power to nominate and appoint a keeper of the poor-house under them, and to remove him at pleasure, and to appoint another in his place: which keeper shall be allowed a salary not exceeding one hundred pounds a year, together with such rooms in the house, and such allowance of fuel and provisions, as they may think fit. The commissioners, or the major part of them, or the acting commissioners under their authority, shall direct and order all the purchases that are to be made for the sue of the house and paupers, in which neither the

commissioner nor keeper shall have any profit or emolument whatever; and shall also make and publish rules for the general government and management of the house, the keeper, servants and paupers, as they may judge best from time to time, and may expel and turn out of the house, and grounds, all such persons, belonging thereto, as shall be disobedient and refractory, and all other persons whomsoever, if they shall see cause therefor.

X. And be it further enacted, that all monies or donations of whatever kind for the relief of the poor, paid or delivered into the hands of the said commissioners, shall be by them applied for the relief and maintenance of the poor under their charge, and the said commissioners shall keep fair and regular accounts of all such monies and donations received by them, and also of all sums of money paid or expended by them, for the support and maintenance of the poor, and also of the earnings of the paupers, and of the disposal thereof, and shall annually, and every year, on the first day of January, or oftener if required, render a full and true account thereof, in writing, to the treasurer of the province, to be by him laid before the supreme court, for inspection and audit.

XI. And be it further enacted, that all vagrants, beggars, and disorderly persons of any kind, shall be received by the commissioners into the poor-house, so that they may be made to earn their living; and such sturdy paupers as can work, and will not, shall be compelled thereto. Provided always, that the said commissioners shall not be obliged to furnish more victuals to such disorderly and disobedient persons, than their earnings will pay for.

XII. And be it further enacted, that the operation of this act shall commence and take effect on the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and two.