

The Provincial Statutes of Lower-Canada, Being the first session of the ninth Provincial Parliament of Lower-Canada. Quebec: P. E. Desbarats, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1817.

57 George III – Chapter 2

An Act for the relief of certain Parishes in Distress. (8th March, 1817.)

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

Whereas it is expedient to provide relief for the suffering Poor in certain Parishes in great distress in the District of Quebec, owing to the total failure of the Harvest of last Year; WE, therefore, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Commons of Lower-Canada, in Provincial Parliament assembled, from regard and feeling for the Poor, and for the general good of the Province, most humbly beseech Your Majesty, that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and content of the Legislative Council and Assembly of the Province of Lower Canada, constituted and assembled by virtue of, and under the authority of an Act passed in the Parliament of Great Britain, intituled, "An Act to repeal certain parts of an Act passed in the fourteenth year of His Majesty's Reign, intituled, 'An Act for making more effectual provision for the government of the Province of Quebec in North America,' and to make further Provision for the Government of the said Province;" And it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that out of the unappropriated monies at present in the hands of the Receiver-General, or which may hereafter come into his hands, there shall be taken and applied a sum not exceeding Fifteen Thousand, five hundred Pounds current money of this Province, for the relief of Parishes in Distress in the manner herein after provided.

II. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that it shall and may be lawful to and for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Person administering the Government of the Province for the time being, to nominate and appoint immediately after the passing of this Act, three Commissioners residing in the City of Quebec, who immediately after their nomination and appointment, shall dispatch a circular letter to the Curates of the Parishes in distress, requiring them to transmit or cause to be transmitted to them the said Commissioners, within ten days next after the receipt of such letter, a correct statement and list, certified upon honor, of all such honest and industrious husbandmen of their respective Parishes as are destitute of the means of procuring, either by their labour or otherwise, subsistence, until the first day of June next; which Curates, upon receipt of such circular letter, and after having without delay, consulted the nearest Justices of the Peace, the Church Wardens, and other principal persons of the respective Parishes, shall, and they are hereby held and required to transmit, or cause to be transmitted to the said Commissioner, the said statements, within the said space of ten days next after the receipt of the said Letter; Provided always, that if the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, or person administering the Government of this Province for the time being, shall deem it expedient to adopt any other more efficacious method of obtaining such lists as aforesaid, than as herein it is provided, it shall and may be lawful for him to adopt the same.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the several Curates of the Parishes in distress, as aforesaid, shall, and they are hereby authorized and required, upon request of the said

Commissioners, to assemble forthwith the Officers of Militia, and the Church wardens in office, in their respective Parishes; which Officers of Militia, and Church-wardens, in such meeting, shall appoint, in their respective Parishes, a Committee of Five Members from among themselves, for the purposes of this Act.

IV. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said three Commissioners, upon receiving the said lists of persons unable to provide themselves by the means aforesaid, with Food until the first of June next, shall themselves contract, or shall authorize the Committee for each Parish, to contract for the furnishing of Provisions and Food at the cheapest rate; which Provisions shall consist of Flour, Biscuit, Meat or Fish, and shall be distributed in each and every Week under the orders and directions of the Curate, and of the said Committee, in the proportion of one Ration for each man; one half of one Ration for each woman; and one third of one Ration for each child of less age than fifteen years; And which Committee is authorized to take the measures which may be necessary for so husbanding the said Provisions and Food, that the said persons so in distress may be therewith supplied while occupied in sowing their Land. Provided always, that if it shall appear to the Curate, or to any three members of the said Committee, that certain of the persons named in the list, have it in their power to earn their food by labour, or some kind of undertaking; or that any of them refuse to work, or misapply the Provisions they may have received, either by selling them in Taverns, or for the purchase of strong Liquors, the said Committee shall be authorized to discontinue the issue of Provisions to such persons; which Provisions shall be paid for by the said persons within two years, according to the Estimate of two persons, whereof one shall be nominated by the said Committee, and the other by the said Commissioners; and the money shall be paid to the said Committee, to be by the same remitted to the said Commissioners, and by the said Commissioners in like manner to the Receiver-General, to be applied according to the future disposition of the Provincial Legislature; and to that effect the said Committee is hereby authorized and empowered to exact such note of hand, acknowledgment, or obligation from the persons receiving such Food and Provisions as aforesaid, as to them may appear necessary, in favor of His Majesty; Provided always, that if the said persons be unable to pay for the said Provisions, within the two years aforesaid, then, upon certificate of the said Curates, and of the Committee affirmed upon oath, before a Justice of the Peace, the Payment may be delayed for a space of time not exceeding two years, over and above the time herein-before fixed and provided. Provided always, that if the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, or person administering the Government of this Province for the time being, shall deem it more expedient for the purposes of this Act, to cause such Provisions to be procured in any other way or mode than as provided by this Act, it shall and may be lawful for him to adopt the same, any thing in the present Act contained, notwithstanding.

V. And in order to prevent the result of abuse and evil consequences, from the relief which shall be given under this Act, be it therefore further enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that the said Commissioners are hereby authorized and required to acquire every information, for learning in what manner this Act is executed in the several Parishes, and to take the measures and precautions necessary to ensure the due execution thereof, and to prevent abuses and evil consequences. And to that purpose, they are hereby required to make such remarks, as they shall deem necessary upon the lists, which shall be sent to them.

VI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said Committee shall keep a Journal of all its Proceedings, whereof it shall forward one copy to the said Commissioners; and the said Commissioners shall render an account of their administration to the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, or person administering the Government of this Province for the time being, to the Legislative Council and to the House of Assembly, at the then next Session of the Provincial Parliament; in which journal they shall insert their remarks and observations upon the result of the said advances, and upon the effects which they may have produced.

VII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if there shall remain a surplus, after the Families of the said Parishes shall so have been supplied with Provisions, such surplus shall be reserved in the hands of the Receiver General for the future disposition of the Legislature. Provided always, that such of the said persons as shall have received such relief in Provisions, and may desire to re-pay the amount thereof in Work, may do so by opening, and making by the job, such new Highways, or Public Bridges, within the limits of their Parishes, or in the neighbourhood thereof, as they may agree upon concerning the same, with the said Committee, or with the consent of the said three Commissioners, residing in the city of Quebec.

VIII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the due application of all monies expended in conformity with the directions of this Act, shall be accounted for to His Majesty, His Heirs and successors, through the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury for the time being, in such manner and form as His Majesty, His Heirs and successors, shall direct.