

*Acts of the General Assembly of His Majesty's Province of New-Brunswick passed in the year 1786.* Saint John, NB: J. Ryan, 1786.

26 George III – Chapter 43

**An Act to regulate and provide for the support of the poor in this province.**

I. Be it enacted by the Governor, Council and Assembly, That the overseers of the poor to be appointed in the several towns and parishes in the respective counties in this province, and the overseers of the poor to be appointed in the city of St. John, shall at the first general sessions of the peace annually in the respective counties where such towns, parishes and city are; lay before the justices at such general sessions, the state and condition of the poor in their several districts which statement the said justices at their said sessions are hereby authorised and required to supervise, examine and allow, and thereupon shall issue their warrants to the assessors of such towns or parishes, and city reflectively, for the assessing and levying the several sums so reflectively allowed upon such statements as aforesaid, which sums shall be rated, assessed and collected, in such manner, at such times, and under the same regulations, restrictions, penalties and forfeitures as county charges are rated, assessed and collected by an act or law of this province entitled, “An act for assessing, collecting and levying county rates,” and shall be paid into the hands of the overseers of the town or parish where such rates are assessed.

II. And be it further enacted, That the said overseers of the poor, or the major part of them, by the with and consent of two or more justices of the peace, dwelling in or near such town or parish respectively, are hereby empower to enquire from time to time after any idle, or disorderly person or persons, married or unmarried, who have no visible means of support, and who are likely to become chargeable to the town or parish where they reside, and to oblige such person or persons to labor for any substantial person who may be willing to employ him or them: and if such poor person or person have children in a suffering condition, the said overseers with the consent of the said justices are hereby empowered to bind such poor children apprentices, the males to be bound until they arrive to the age of twenty-one years, and the females to the age of eighteen years; and for such poor who are not able to earn a living but are supported at the public expense, the said overseers with the consent of the general sessions, are hereby empowered to hire or purchase a house for the reception of such poor, and to purchase materials to employ such of them as are able to labor; or to agree with some person residing in the same town or parish to take into their house at a yearly allowance and employ such poor in any labor they are able to do, and to give credit for the same to the overseers, from the sum allowed them for the said yearly maintenance of such poor; and that public charities may not be abused, the said overseers are hereby directed to act with impartiality, and to put the said poor in the hands of the person who shall offer to keep them for the least expense, having at the same time a regard to the character of the person who offers, so that the poor may not be inhumanly treated, nor the public abused;

and for which sum or sums of money, so expended, and all other expenses of the poor, in each town or parish they the said overseers respectively, are hereby authorized and required to ascertain and lay the same before the said justices as aforesaid at their general sessions, and the same so ascertained and allowed by the said general sessions shall be by them ordered to be assessed, collected and paid as aforesaid, unless the funds for the support of the poor and appropriated to such town in the respective county treasury are sufficient to pay said expense.