

C H A P.
XXV.
Punishment
for perjury.

Penalties how
to be recover-
ed and ap-
plied.

VII. And be it further enacted, That any person whatsoever, falsely and corruptly making the oath aforesaid, shall and may be prosecuted in the same manner, and suffer the like punishment as for wilful and corrupt perjury. And that in any suit or prosecution for the recovery of any penalty under this act, the defendant or defendants may, in the discretion of the court, be awarded to give special bail, one half of all which penalties, where the recovery shall be by action of debt or information *quitam*, to the use of the informer, or him, her or them, that shall sue for and recover the same; and the other half thereof shall be paid to the sheriff of the county where the recovery shall be had, and by him paid into the hands of the treasurer of the shore whereon the same shall be recovered, for the use of the public of this province, to be applied and laid out in the purchase of a place, and building a pest-house for the reception of the infected, as the general assembly for the time being shall direct; or where the recovery shall be had, otherwise than by action of debt, or information *quitam*, the whole of the said penalties shall be paid and applied to the uses last aforesaid.

Duration.

VIII. This act to continue three years, and to the end of the next session of assembly which shall happen after the expiration of the said three years.

This act was continued for three years, &c. by the act of 1769, ch. 4, and for three years, &c. by the act of June, 1773, ch. 2; for seven years, &c. by the act of February, 1777, ch. 17, and by the act of 1784, ch. 83, until the end of the next session; and by the act of 1785, ch. 77, it is continued for seven years, &c.

C H A P. XXVI.

An ACT for the payment of the public claims, for emitting bills of credit, and for other purposes therein mentioned.

At the time of passing this act, there appeared, by the journal of accounts and list of debts, assented to by both houses, to be due from the public the quantity of 5,623,499¹/₂ lb. of tobacco, payable in money, and equal to £. 21,088 2 6 sterling, at the rate of 7/6 sterling for 100 lb. of tobacco; and the sum of £. 19,841 1 2 nominal money, equal, at the real exchange, to £. 11,904 12 8¹/₂ sterling; these two sums amounting to £. 32,992 15 2¹/₄ sterling. It likewise appeared, from the last account rendered by the trustees of the bank stock, dated the 20th of May, 1766, that this stock amounted to £. 26,800; and that the dividend, not invested, amounted to £. 5,230 17 2; at the same time, there was in the province a great scarcity of specie, and public credit was reduced to an extreme low condition, in consequence of a difference which had long subsisted between the two houses, respecting the claim of the clerk of the upper house, and which had for several years prevented the passage of the journal, or the taking of any measures for discharging the public debt.

To remedy the evils aforesaid, to render justice to all, to restore public credit, and to increase the circulating medium, bills of credit, on the foundation of the bank stock, of various denominations, to the amount of 173,733 dollars, are by this act directed to be struck by the 20th of February next. Two commissioners are to be appointed by the governor to superintend and direct the press, to choose the devices and marks, and afterwards to sign the bills. These commissioners are empowered to appoint a clerk, who, as well as themselves, is to give bond with security for the faithful discharge of duty, and to take the several oaths to government, with the test, and an oath of office. The printer too must take an oath to perform his duty. To counterfeit, or alter the sum expressed in any of the said bills, or knowingly to utter or offer any counterfeited or altered bill, is made a capital offence. The act further contains provisions for preventing fraud at the press.

When the bills shall have been printed and signed, they are to be deposited in one of the iron chests in the paper currency office. This chest is to have two locks of different construction; it is to be kept in the repository, and each commissioner is to have a key, so that neither may have access to the money but in the presence of the other. They are to attend at the said office at stated hours and days, until the 10th of June next, and until that time they are to apply these bills of credit to the discharge of the journal of accounts. They are likewise empowered to pay the printer 800 dollars, and their clerk 200 dollars; and they are allowed likewise to defray the reasonable expences of their office, and to retain, for their services, the sum of 250 dollars each. They are directed also, to deliver to one of the treasurers the sum of 1,703¹/₂ dollars, that being the amount of the claim of the late and present clerk of the upper house, together with the sum of 85¹/₂ dollars for the said treasurer's commission. The treasurer is directed to receive and place out at interest, the principal sum, until a final determination respecting the legality of the said claim, shall be obtained from his majesty in council, to whom, by this act, both houses have agreed to refer their controversy. And the treasurer is to account with the said clerk or with the public agreeably to that determination.

The commissioners are directed further, to keep a fair account of all payments and receipts for the same. These are to be laid before a committee of both houses, which is to be appointed at the first session of assembly, after the 10th of June next. And upon an examination of their accounts and proceedings had by the committee, their power is to cease, and every thing in their charge is to be delivered up. The key of the repository is to be delivered to the governor; one of the keys of the iron chest is to be delivered to the president, the other to the speaker; and all these keys are to be by these persons respectively kept. The repository and the iron chest are afterwards not to be opened, but in the presence of a committee of both houses, to be appointed at every session, for the purpose of opening and reporting the condition of the same. This committee is likewise, with the bills remaining in the chest, to exchange torn and defaced bills, and to pay such creditors as shall appear not to have been paid by the commissioners. It is also to correspond