



Servants' Characters Act 1792

1792 CHAPTER 56 32 Geo 3

An Act for preventing the counterfeiting of Certificates of the Characters of Servants.

Preamble. Whereas many false and counterfeit characters of servants have either been given personally or in writing by evil disposed persons being or pretending to be the master, mistress, retainer or superintendent of such servants, or by persons who have actually retained such servants in their respective service, contrary to truth and justice and to the peace and security of his Majesty's subjects: And whereas the evil herein complained of is not only difficult to be guarded against, but is also of great magnitude and continually increasing, and no sufficient remedy has hitherto been applied:

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 Short title given by [Short Titles Act 1896 \(c. 14\)](#)

[1.] Any person personating a master, &c. or giving a false character to a servant;

If any person or persons shall falsely personate any master or mistress, or the executor, administrator, wife, relation, housekeeper, steward, agent or servant of any such master or mistress, and shall [^{F1}either] personally [^{F1}or in writing] give any false, [^{F1}forged or counterfeited] character to any person offering him or herself to be hired as a servant into the service of any person or persons, then and in such case every such person or persons so offending shall forfeit and undergo the penalty or punishment herein-after mentioned and in that behalf provided.

Textual Amendments

F1 S. 1 the word "either", the words "or in writing" and the words "forged or counterfeited" repealed (E.W.) by [Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981 \(c. 45, SIF 39:7\)](#), [Sch. Pt. I](#)

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2 Or asserting that a servant has been hired for a period of time, or in a station;

And if any person or persons shall knowingly and wilfully pretend or falsely assert in writing that any servant has been hired or retained for any period of time whatsoever, or in any station or capacity whatsoever, other than that for which or in which he, she or they shall have hired or retained such servant in his, her or their service or employment, or for the service of any other person or persons, then and in either of the said cases such person or persons so offending as aforesaid shall forfeit and undergo the penalty or punishment herein-after mentioned and in that behalf provided.

3 or was discharged at any other time, or had not been hired in any previous service; contrary to the fact;

And if any person or persons shall knowingly and wilfully pretend or falsely assert in writing that any servant was discharged or left his, her or their service at any other time than that at which he or she was discharged or actually left such service, or that any such servant had not been hired or employed in any previous service, contrary to truth, then and in either of the said cases such person or persons shall forfeit and undergo the penalty or punishment herein-after mentioned and in that behalf provided.

4 or any person offering himself as a servant, pretending to have served where he has not served, or with a false certificate, or who shall alter any certificate;

And if any person shall offer himself or herself as a servant, asserting or pretending that he or she hath served in any service in which such servant shall not actually have served, or with a false, [^{F2}forged or counterfeit] certificate of his or her character, [^{F2}or shall in anywise add to or alter, efface or erase, any word, date, matter or thing contained in or referred to in any certificate given to him or her by his or her last or former actual master or mistress, or by any other person or persons duly authorised by such master or mistress to give the same] , then and in either of the said cases such person or persons shall forfeit and undergo the penalty or punishment herein-after mentioned and in that behalf provided.

Textual Amendments

- F2** [S. 4](#) the words “forged or counterfeit” and the words from “or shall” to “the same” repealed (E.W.) by [Forgery and Counterfeiting Act 1981 \(c. 45, SIF 39:7\)](#), [Sch. Pt. I](#)

5 or who having been before in service shall pretend not to have been in such service;

And if any person or persons having before been in service shall, when offering to hire himself, herself or themselves as a servant or servants in any service whatsoever, falsely and wilfully pretend not to have been hired or retained in any previous service as a servant, then and in such case such person or persons shall forfeit and undergo the penalty or punishment herein-after mentioned and in that behalf provided.

6 shall, on conviction, forfeit 20l. Persons not paying the penalty with costs, or not giving notice of appeal, &c. may be committed.

And if any person or persons shall be convicted of any or either of the offence or offences aforesaid by his, her or their confession, or by the oath of one or more

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credible witness or witnesses, before two or more justices of the peace for the county, riding, division, city, liberty, town or place where the offence or offences shall have been committed (which oath such justices are hereby empowered and required to administer), every such offender or offenders shall forfeit the sum of twenty pounds . . .^{F3} and if the party who shall have been so convicted shall not immediately pay the said sum of twenty pounds so forfeited, together with . . .^{F4} the costs and charges attending such conviction, or shall not give notice of appeal . . .^{F5} in the manner herein-after mentioned and in that behalf provided, such justices shall and may commit every such offender to the house of correction or some other prison of the county, riding, division, city, liberty, town or place in which he or she shall have been convicted, there to remain . . .^{F6}

Textual Amendments

- F3** Words repealed by [Justices of the Peace Act 1949 \(c. 101\)](#), [Sch. 7 Pt. III](#)
- F4** Words repealed by [Summary Jurisdiction Act 1884 \(c. 43\)](#), [Sch.](#)
- F5** Words repealed by [Bail Act 1976 \(c. 63\)](#), [Sch. 3](#)
- F6** Words omitted by virtue of [Criminal Justice Act 1948 \(c. 58\)](#), [s. 1\(2\)](#) and repealed by [Summary Jurisdiction Act 1884 \(c. 43\)](#), [Sch.](#)

7^{F7}

Textual Amendments

- F7** [S. 7](#) repealed by [Statute Law Revision Act 1871 \(c. 116\)](#)

8 Offenders discovering accomplices before information indemnified.

Provided always, that if any servant or servants who shall have been guilty of any of the offences aforesaid shall, before any information has been given or lodged against him, her or them for such offence, discover and inform against any person or persons concerned with him, her or them in any offence against this Act, so as such offender or offenders be convicted of such offence in manner aforesaid, every such servant or servants so discovering and informing shall thereupon be discharged and indemnified of, from and against all penalties and punishments to which at the time of such information given he, she or they might be liable by this Act for or by reason of such his, her or their own offence or offences.

9^{F8}

Textual Amendments

- F8** [S. 9](#) repealed by [Summary Jurisdiction Act 1884 \(c. 43\)](#), [Sch.](#)

10^{F9}

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Textual Amendments

F9 S. 10 repealed by Courts Act 1971 (c. 23), Sch. 11 Pt. IV

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