



Forfeiture Act 1870

1870 CHAPTER 23

An Act to abolish Forfeitures for Treason and Felony, and to otherwise amend the Law relating thereto. [4th July 1870]

WHEREAS it is expedient to abolish the forfeiture of lands ,and goods for treason and felony, and to otherwise amend the law relating thereto :

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows ; (that is to say,)

1 Forfeiture, &c, abolished.

From and after the passing of this Act no confession, verdict, inquest, conviction, or judgment of or for any treason or felony or *felo de se* shall cause any attainder or corruption of blood, or any forfeiture or escheat, provided that nothing in this Act shall affect the law of forfeiture consequent upon outlawry.

2 Conviction for treason or felony to be a disqualification for offices, &c.

Provided nevertheless, that if any person hereafter convicted of treason or felony, for which he shall be sentenced to death, or penal servitude, or any term of imprisonment with hard labour, or exceeding twelve months, shall at the time of such conviction hold any military or naval office or any civil office under the Crown or other public employment, or any ecclesiastical benefice, or any place, office, or emolument in any university, college, or other corporation, or be entitled to any pension or superannuation allowance payable by the public, or out of any public fund, such office, benefice, employment, or place shall forthwith become vacant, and such pension or superannuation allowance or emolument shall forthwith determine and cease to be payable, unless such person shall receive a free pardon from Her Majesty, within two mouths after such conviction, or before the filling up of such office, benefice, employment; or place if given at a later period ; and such person shall become, and

(until he shall have suffered the punishment to which he had been sentenced, or such other punishment as by competent authority may be substituted for the same, or shall receive a free pardon from Her Majesty), shall continue thenceforth incapable of holding any military or naval office, or any civil office under the Crown or other public employment, or any ecclesiastical benefice, or of being elected, or sitting, or voting as a member of either House of Parliament, or of exercising any right of suffrage or other parliamentary or municipal franchise whatever within England, Wales, or Ireland,

3 Persons convicted of treason or felony may be condemned in costs.

It shall be lawful for any Court by which judgment shall be pronounced or recorded, upon the conviction of any person for treason or felony, in addition to such sentence as may otherwise by law be passed, to condemn such person to the payment of the whole or any part of the costs or expenses incurred in and about the prosecution and conviction for the offence of which he shall be convicted, if to such Court it shall seem fit so to do; and the payment of such costs and expenses, or any part thereof, may be ordered by the Court to be made out of any moneys taken from such person on his apprehension, or may be enforced at the instance of any person liable to pay, or who may have paid the same, in such and the same manner (subject to the provisions of this Act) as the payment of any costs ordered to be paid by the judgment or order of any Court of competent jurisdiction in any civil action or proceeding may for the time being be enforced: Provided, that in the meantime and until the recovery of such costs and expenses from the person so convicted as aforesaid, or from his estate, the same shall be paid and provided for in the same manner as if this Act had not passed; and any money which may be recovered in respect thereof from the person so convicted, or from his estate, shall be applicable to the reimbursement of any person or fund by whom or out of which such costs and expenses may have been paid or defrayed.

4 Compensation to persons defrauded or injured by felony.

It shall be lawful for any such Court as aforesaid, if it shall think fit, upon the application of any person aggrieved, and immediately after the conviction of any person for felony, to award any sum of money, not exceeding one hundred pounds, by way of satisfaction or compensation for any loss of property suffered by the applicant through or by means of the said felony, and the amount awarded for such satisfaction or compensation shall be deemed a judgment debt due to the person entitled to receive the same from the person so convicted, and the order for payment of such amount may be enforced in such and the same manner as in the case of any costs ordered by the Court to be paid under the last preceding section of this Act.

5 The word "forfeiture" defined.

The word "forfeiture," in the construction of this Act, shall not include any fine or penalty imposed on any convict by virtue of his sentence.

6 The word "convict" defined.

The expression "convict," as herein-after used, shall be deemed to mean any person against whom, after the passing of this Act, judgment of death, or of penal servitude, shall have been pronounced or recorded by any Court of competent jurisdiction in England, Wales, or Ireland upon any charge of treason or felony.

7 When convict shall cease to be subject to operation of the Act.

When any convict shall die or be made bankrupt, or shall have suffered any punishment to which sentence of death if pronounced or recorded against him may be lawfully commuted, or shall have undergone the full term of penal servitude for which judgment shall have been pronounced or recorded against him, or such other punishment as may by competent authority have, been substituted for such full term, or shall have received Her Majesty's pardon for the treason or felony of which he may have been convicted, he shall thenceforth, so far as relates to the provisions herein-after contained, cease to be subject to the operation of this Act.

8 Convict disabled to sue for or to alienate property, &c.

No action at law or suit in equity for the recovery of any property, debt, or damage whatsoever shall be brought by any convict against any person during the time while he shall be subject to the operation of this Act; and every convict shall be incapable, during such time as aforesaid, of alienating or charging any property, or of making any contract, save as herein-after provided.

9 The Crown may appoint administrators of any convict's property.

It shall be lawful for Her Majesty, or for any person in that behalf authorized by Her Majesty, under Her Royal Sign Manual (and which authority may be given either generally or with reference to any particular case), if to Her Majesty or to the person so authorized it shall seem fit, by writing under Her Majesty's Royal Sign Manual, or under the hand of the person so authorized as aforesaid, to commit the custody and management of the property of any convict, during Her Majesty's pleasure, to an administrator, to be by such writing appointed in that behalf; and every such appointment may be revoked by the same or the like authority by which it is made; and upon any determination thereof, either by revocation or by the death or any such administrator, a new administrator may be appointed by the same or the like authority from time to time; and every such new administrator shall, upon his appointment, be and be deemed to be the successor-in-law of the former administrator; and all property vested in, and all powers given to, such former administrator by virtue of this Act shall thereupon devolve to and become vested in such successor, who shall be bound by all acts lawfully done by such former administrator during the continuance of his office; and the provisions herein-after contained with reference to any administrator shall, in the case of the appointment of more than one person, apply to such administrators jointly.

10 Convict's property to vest in administrators on their appointment.

Upon the appointment of any such administrator in manner aforesaid all the real and personal property, including choses in actions, to which the convict named in such appointment was at the time of his conviction, or shall afterwards while he shall continue subject to the operations of this Act, become or be entitled, shall vest in such administrator for all the estate and interest of such convict therein.

11 Remuneration of administrators.

If, in the instrument by which any such administrator, is appointed, provision shall be made for the remuneration of such administrator out of the property of the convict,

the said administrator may receive and retain for his own benefit such remuneration accordingly.

12 Administrators to have administration of property during sentences of Convicts.

The administrator shall have absolute power to let, mortgage, sell, convey, and transfer any part of such property as to him shall seem fit.

13 Administrator to pay out of property costs of prosecution and costs of executing this Act.

It shall be lawful for the administrator to pay or cause to be paid out of such property, or the proceeds thereof, all costs and expenses which the convict may have been condemned to pay; and also all costs, charges, and expenses incurred by such convict in and about his defence; and also all such costs, charges, and expenses as the said administrator may incur or be put to in or about the carrying this Act into execution with reference to such property, or with reference to any claims which may be made thereon.

14 Administrator may pay out of property debts or liabilities of convict.

The administrator may cause payment or satisfaction to be made out of such property of any debt or liability of such convict which may be established in due course of law, or may otherwise be proved to his satisfaction, and may also cause any property which may come to his hands to be delivered to any person claiming to be justly entitled thereto, upon the right of such person being established in due course of law, or otherwise to his satisfaction.

15 Administrators may make compensations out of property to persons defrauded by criminal acts of convict.

The administrator may cause to be paid or satisfied out of such property such sum of money by way of satisfaction or compensation for any loss of property or other injury alleged to have been, suffered by any person through or by means of any alleged criminal or fraudulent act of such convict, as to him shall seem just, although no proof of such alleged criminal or fraudulent act may have been made in any Court of law or equity; and all claims to any such satisfaction or compensation may be investigated in such manner as the administrator shall think fit, and the decision of the administrator thereon shall be binding : Provided always, that nothing in this Act shall take away or prejudice any right title, or remedy to which any person alleging himself to have suffered any such loss or injury would have been entitled by law if this Act had not passed.

16 Administrator may make allowances out of property for support of family of convict.

The administrator may cause such payments and allowances for the support or maintenance of any wife or child, or reputed child of such convict, or of any other relative or reputed relative of such convict dependent upon him for support, or for the benefit of the convict himself, if and while he shall be lawfully at large under any licence, as to such administrator shall seem fit, to be made from time to time- out of such property, or the income thereof.

17 Exercise of administrator's power as to priority of payments; payments by administrator for purposes of Act not to be called in question.

The several powers herein-before given to the said administrator, or any of them, may be exercised by him in such order and course, as to priority of payments or otherwise, as he shall think fit; and all contracts of letting or sale, mortgages, conveyances, or transfers of property, bona fide made by the said administrator under the powers of this Act, and all payments or deliveries over of property bona fide made by or under the authority of the said administrator for any of the purposes herein-before mentioned, shall be binding; and the propriety thereof, and the sufficiency of the grounds on which the said administrator may have exercised his judgment or discretion in respect thereof, shall not be in any manner called in question by such convict, or by any person claiming an interest in such property by virtue of this Act,

18 Property to be preserved for convict, and to revert to him or his representatives on completion of sentence, pardon, or death.

Subject to the powers and provisions herein-before contained, all such property and the income thereof shall be preserved and held in trust by the said administrator, and the income thereof may, if and when the said administrator shall think proper, be invested and accumulated in such securities as he shall from time to time think fit, for the use and benefit of the said convict and his heirs, or legal personal representatives, or of such other persons as may be lawfully entitled thereto, according to the nature thereof; and the same, and the possession, administration, and management thereof, shall revert in and be restored to such convict upon his ceasing to be subject to the operation of this Act, or in and to his heirs or legal personal representatives, or such other persons as may be lawfully entitled thereto; and all the powers and authorities by this Act given to the said administrator shall from thenceforth cease and determine, except so far as the continuance thereof may be necessary for the care and preservation of such property or any part thereof, until the same shall be claimed by some person lawfully entitled thereto, or for obtaining payment out of such property, or of the proceeds thereof, of any liabilities, or any costs, charges, or expenses, for which provision is made by this Act; for which purposes such powers and authorities shall continue to be in force until possession of such property shall be delivered up by the said administrator to some person being or claiming to be lawfully entitled thereto.

19 Administrators not to be liable, except for what they receive.

The said administrator shall not be answerable to any person for any property which shall not actually have come to his hands by virtue of this Act, nor for any loss or damage which may happen through any mere omission or nonfeasance on his part to any property vested in him by virtue hereof.

20 Administrator to receive costs of suits of property as between solicitor and client.

The costs as between solicitor and client of every action or suit which may be brought against the said administrator with reference to any such property as aforesaid, whether during the time while the same shall be and continue vested in him under this Act or after the same shall cease to be so vested, and all charges and expenses properly incurred by him with reference thereto, shall be a first charge upon and shall be paid out of such property, unless the Court before which such action is tried or such suit is heard shall think fit otherwise to order.

21 If no administrator, interim curator may be appointed by justices.

If no such administrator as aforesaid shall have been appointed an interim curator of the property of any convict may be appointed by any justices of the peace in petty sessions assembled, or, where there are no petty sessions, by any justice of the peace having jurisdiction in the place where such convict before his conviction shall have last usually resided, upon the application of any person who shall be able to satisfy such justice that the application is made bona fide with a view to the benefit of the convict or of his family, or to the due and proper administration and management of his property and affairs; and the interim curator to be appointed may be either the person making the application or any other person willing to accept the office, and competent to discharge its duties, as to such justice shall seem fit.

22 Proceedings before justices.

Before making any such appointment the justice shall require the applicant to make oath that no administrator or interim curator of the property of such convict has been to his knowledge or belief already appointed; and the applicant shall also state upon oath, to the best of his knowledge and belief, who are the nearest relatives (including any husband or wife) of such convict, and (if any such there be) where they are residing, and whether any and which of them have consented to or have had notice of such application; and it shall be competent for such justice to require notice of such application to be given to all such persons and in such manner as to such justice shall seem fit.

23 Removal of interim curator for cause shown.

Any interim curator so appointed may be removed, for any cause shown to the satisfaction of the justices or justice or the Court, upon the application of any relative of the convict, or of any person interested in the due and proper administration and management of his property and affairs, either by the petty sessions or justice by whom he was appointed (or, in the event of such justice dying or being unable to act, by any other justice having the like jurisdiction) or by any Court in which proceedings for an account may be instituted as herein after provided; and upon the death or removal of any such interim curator a new interim curator may be appointed in the same manner and by the like authority as aforesaid, or (in case any such proceedings shall be then depending) by the Court in which any such proceedings shall be so depending as aforesaid.

24 Powers of interim curator.

Every interim curator so appointed as aforesaid shall have power (unless and until an administrator shall be appointed under this Act, in which case the authority of such interim curator shall thenceforth cease and determine) to sue in his own name as such interim curator, at law or in equity, for the possession and recovery of any part of the property in respect of which he shall have been so appointed, or for damages in respect of any injury thereto, and to defend in his own name as such interim curator any action or suit brought against such convict or against himself in respect of such property, and to receive and give legal discharges for all rents, dividends, interest, and income of or arising from such property, and also to receive and give discharges for any debts due to such convict, or forming part of his property, and to pay and discharge all or any debts due from such convict out of such property, and to settle and adjust accounts with any debtor or creditor of such convict, and generally to manage and administer

the property of such convict; and also to make or cause to be made such payments and allowances for the support or maintenance of any wife or child of such convict, or of any other relative dependent on him for support, as shall be specially authorized by any such justice or Court aforesaid (who shall have power from time to time to authorize the same), or by any other Court having competent jurisdiction to authorize the same, out of the income of such property, or (in case such income shall be insufficient for that purpose) out of the capital thereof; and every such interim curator shall be entitled to retain out of such property, or out of the income thereof, all his costs, charges, and expenses properly incurred in and about the discharge of his duties as such curator.

25 Personal property may be sold by interim curator under special order of justices or Court.

Any personal property of such convict may be sold and transferred by such interim curator by and with the authority of such justice, or Court as aforesaid, or of any other Court having competent jurisdiction to order the same, but not otherwise; and such interim curator shall be accountable for the proceeds of any property so sold in the same manner as for such property while remaining unsold.

26 Proceedings by or against interim curator not to abate if administrator is appointed.

All proceedings at law or in equity duly instituted by or against any such interim curator may (in case of an administrator or a new interim curator being afterwards appointed) be continued by or against such administrator or such new interim curator without any abatement thereof, the appointment of such administrator or new interim curator being entered by way of suggestion on the record, or otherwise stated upon the proceedings, according to the practice of such Court; and all acts lawfully done and contracts lawfully made by such interim curator with respect to any property of such convict before the appointment of such administrator or such new interim curator shall be binding upon such administrator or such new interim curator after his appointment.

27 Execution of judgments against convict provided for.

All judgments or orders for the payment of money of any Court of law or equity against such convict which shall have been duly recovered or made, either before or after his conviction, may be executed against any property of such convict under the care and management of any such interim curator as aforesaid, or in the hands of any person who may have taken upon himself the possession or management thereof without legal authority, in the same manner as if such property were in the possession or power of such convict; and all such judgments or orders may likewise be executed by writ of scire facias or otherwise, according to the practice of the court, against any such property which may be vested in any administrator of the property of such convict under the authority of this Act.

28 Proceedings may be taken to make administrator or interim curator, &c. accountable before property reverts to convict.

It shall be competent for Her Majesty's Attorney General, or other the chief law officer of the Crown for the time being in any part of Her Majesty's dominions, or for any person who (if such convict were dead intestate) would be his heir at law, or entitled to his personal estate, or any share thereof, under the Statutes of Distribution

or otherwise, or for any person authorized by Her Majesty's Attorney General, or by such chief law officer as aforesaid, in that behalf, to apply in a summary way to any Court which (if such convict were dead) would have jurisdiction to entertain a suit for the administration of his real or personal estate, to issue a writ of summons calling upon any administrator or interim curator of the property of such convict appointed under this Act, or any person who without legal authority shall have possessed himself of any part of the property of such convict, to account for his receipts and payments in respect of the property of such convict, in such manner as such Court shall direct; and it shall be lawful for such Court thereupon to issue such writ of summons, and to enforce obedience thereto, and to all orders and proceedings of such Court consequent thereon, in the same manner as in any other case of process lawfully issuing out of such Court ; and such Court shall thereupon have full power, jurisdiction, and authority to take all such accounts, and to make and give all such orders and directions as to it shall seem proper or necessary for the purpose of securing the due and proper care, administration, and management of the property of such convict, and the due and proper application of the same, and of the income thereof, and the accumulation and investment of such balances, if any, as may from time to time remain in the hands of any such administrator or interim curator, or other person as aforesaid in respect of such property ; and so long as any such proceedings shall be pending in any such Court, every such administrator or interim curator, or other person, shall act in the exercise of all powers vested in him under this Act, or otherwise in all respects as such Court shall direct; and it shall be lawful for such Court (if it shall think fit) to authorize and direct any act to be done by any such interim curator which might competently be done by an administrator duly appointed under this Act.

29 Administrator, &c. to be accountable to convict when property reverts.

Subject to the provisions of this Act, every such, administrator, interim curator, and other person as aforesaid shall, from and after the time when such convict shall cease to be subject to the operation of this Act, be accountable to such convict for all property of such convict which shall have been by him possessed or received and not duly administered, in the same manner in which any guardian or trustee is now accountable to his ward or cestuique trust; but subject nevertheless and without prejudice to the administration and application of such property under and according to the powers of this Act.

30 Property of convict acquired while lawfully at large not to be subject to the operation of this Act.

Provided always, that no property acquired by a convict during the time which he shall be lawfully at large under any licence shall vest in any administrator appointed under this Act, but such convict shall be entitled thereto without any interference on the part of any administrator or interim curator appointed under this Act, and during the time last aforesaid the disabilities mentioned in. the eight section of this Act shall, as to such convict, be suspended.

31 Judgment in cases of high treason.

Prom and after the passing of this Act such portions of the Acts of the thirtieth year of George the Third, chapter forty-eight, and the fifty-fourth year of George the Third, chapter one hundred and forty-six, as enacts that the judgment required by law to be awarded against persons adjudged guilty of high treason shall include the drawing of

the person on a hurdle to the place of execution, and, after execution, the severing of the head from the body, and the dividing of the body into four quarters, shall be and are hereby repealed.

32 Saving of general law as to felony.

Provided always, that nothing in this Act shall be deemed to alter or in anywise affect the law relating to felony in England, Wales, or Ireland, except as herein is expressly enacted.

33 Extent of Act.

This Act shall not apply to Scotland.