



An Act

Passed by the Great and General Court or Assembly of His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England Begun and Held at Boston upon Wednesday the thirtieth Day of May 1750. and continued by Prorogations to Thursday the tenth of January following

An Act for preventing and suppressing of Riots, Routs, and unlawful Assemblies.

WHEREAS the Provision already made by Law has been found insufficient to prevent Routs, Riots, and tumultuous Assemblies, and the evil Consequences thereof :

Wherefore,

Be it enacted by the Lieutenant Governour Council and House of Representatives, That from and after the Publication of this Act, if any Persons to the Number of Twelve or more, being Arm'd with Clubs or other Weapons, or if any Number of Persons consisting of Fifty or upwards, whether armed or not, shall be unlawfully riotously or tumultuously assembled ; any Justice of the Peace, Field-Officer or Captain of the Militia, Sheriff of the County or Under-Sheriff, or any Constable of the Town, shall among the Rioters, or as near to them as he can safely come, command Silence while Proclamation is making, and shall openly make Proclamation in these or the like Words,

Our Sovereign Lord the KING, chargeth and commandeth all Persons, being assembled, immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their Habitations, or to their lawful Business, upon the Pains contained in the Act of this Province made in the twenty-fourth Year of His Majesty King GEORGE the Second, for preventing and suppressing of Riots, Routs, and unlawful Assemblies.

G O D save the K I N G.

And if such Persons so unlawfully assembled, shall after Proclamation made, not disperse themselves within one Hour, it shall be lawful for every such Officer or Officers and for such other Persons as he or they shall command to be assisting, to seize such Persons, and carry them before a Justice of Peace : And if such Person shall be killed or hurt by Reason of their resisting the Persons so dispersing or seizing them, the said Officer or Officers and their Assistants shall be indemnified and held guiltless. And all Persons who for the Space of one Hour after Proclamation made as aforesaid, or to whom Proclamation ought to have been made, if the same had not been hindred, shall unlawfully, routously, riotously and tumultuously continue together, or shall wilfully let or hinder any such Officer who shall be known, or shall openly declare himself to be such, from making the said Proclamation, shall forfeit all their Lands and Tenements, Goods and Chattels, to His Majesty. (or such a Part thereof as shall be adjudged by the Justices before whom such Offence shall be tried) to be applied towards the Support of the Government of this Province, and shall be whipt thirty-nine Stripes on the naked Back at the publick Whipping-Post, and suffer one Year's Imprisonment, and once every three Months during said Imprisonment, receive the same Number of Stripes on the naked Back, at the publick Whipping-Post, as aforesaid. And if any such Person or Persons so riotously assembled, shall demolish or pull down, or begin to demolish or pull down any Dwelling-House or other House parcel thereof, any House built for publick Uses, any Barn, Mill, Malt-House, Store-House, Shop or Ship, he or they shall suffer the same Pains and Penalties, as are before provided in this Act.

And be it further enacted, That this Act shall be read at every General Sessions of the Peace, and at the anniversary Meeting of each Town, within this Province annually ; and no Person shall be prosecuted for any Offence contrary to this Act, unless Prosecution be commenced within twelve Months after the Offence committed. *Provided always,* That where there shall appear any Circumstances to mitigate or alleviate any of the Offences against this Act in the Judgment of the Court before which such Offence shall be tried, it shall and may be lawful for the Judges of such Court to abate the whole of the Punishment of Whipping, or such Part thereof as they shall judge proper : Any Thing in this Act to the contrary notwithstanding.

This Act to continue and be in Force for the Space of three Years from the Publication thereof, and no longer.

[This Act was Published February 14. 1750.]