

ANNO SEXTO

GEORGII IV. REGIS.

****

CAP. IV.

An Act to amend certain Acts relating to unlawful Societies in *Ireland*. [9th *March* 1825.]

WHEREAS by an Act passed in the Parliament of *Ireland*, in the Thirty-third Year of the Reign of His late Majesty King *George* the Third, intituled *An Act to prevent the Election or Appointment of unlawful Assemblies, under Pretence of preparing or presenting public Petitions or other Addresses to His Majesty, or the Parliament*, all Assemblies, Committees, or other Bodies of Men, elected, constituted, or appointed to represent, or assuming or exercising a Right or Authority to represent the People of *Ireland*, or any Number or Description of the People of the same, or the People of any Province, County, City, Town, or other District within the same, under Pretence of petitioning for or in any other Manner procuring an Alteration of Matters established by Law in Church or State, save and except the Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses elected to serve in Parliament, and the Houses of Convocation, duly summoned by the King's Writ, are declared and enacted to be unlawful Assemblies; and Provision is thereby made for the Dispersion of all such unlawful Assemblies, and for the Punishment of Persons acting or assisting in the Election or Appointment of such Assemblies: And whereas it has been found that Societies, Committees, and other Bodies of Persons in *Ireland*, without any previous Election or Appointment by the People, or by any Number or Description thereof, may be so constituted that the Mischiefs intended to be provided against by the said Act, may equally arise; and it is therefore expedient to extend the Provisions contained in the said Act; be it therefore enacted by the King'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, That from and after the Commencement of this Act, every Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons now constituted, or to be hereafter constituted in *Ireland*, assuming or in any Manner, or by any Means or Contrivance, exercising the Power of acting for the Purpose or under the Pretence of procuring the Redress of Grievances in Church or State, or the Alteration of any

Irish Act, 33 G. 3. c. 29.

Every Society or other Body of Persons acting for Redress of Grievances in Church or State, or for

carrying on or defending Actions, &c. renewing its Meetings for more than 14 Days, or collecting or receiving Money, declared unlawful.

any Matters by Law established in Church or State, or for the Purpose or under the Pretence of carrying on or assisting in the Prosecution or Defence of Causes, civil or criminal, which, or the Members thereof, or any of them, shall for the Purposes aforesaid, or any of them, continue or renew their Meetings or Proceedings, whether under the same or any different Name or Names, by Adjournment or otherwise, for a longer Time than Fourteen Days from their First Meeting, or which, or the Members thereof, or any of them, shall appoint, authorize, or employ any Committee or other select Body, or any President, Secretary, Delegate, or other Officer, to act for them or under their Authority, unless such Appointment, Authority, or Employment be limited to a Period not exceeding Fourteen Days from the First Meeting of such Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons, or to report to them after the Expiration of such Period as aforesaid; or which, or the Members thereof, or any of them, shall appoint, authorize, or employ any select Body or Bodies, or any Treasurer, Collector, or any Person or Persons, to levy or receive, or which, or the Members thereof, or any of them, shall receive when levied, any Money or Contributions from His Majesty's Subjects, or from any of them, or from any Number or Description of them, shall be deemed an unlawful Combination and Confederacy, and the Meetings thereof, or of any of the Members thereof, for the Purposes or under the Pretences aforesaid, or any of them, unlawful Assemblies.

Societies employing Committees, &c. of former Societies, declared unlawful.

II. And be it further enacted, That any Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons in *Ireland*, assuming, or in any Manner or by any Means or Contrivance exercising the Power of acting for the Purposes or under the Pretences aforesaid, or any of them, which Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons, or the Members thereof, or any of them, shall appoint, authorize, employ, or make use of any Committee or other select Body, or any Member or Members of such Committee or other select Body, or any President, Secretary, Delegate, Agent, or other Officer or Member theretofore, within the Space of Six Calendar Months next preceding, appointed, authorized, employed, or used by any Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons, which would have been an unlawful Combination and Confederacy if the Meetings or Proceedings thereof had been continued or renewed by Adjournment or otherwise, for a longer Term than Fourteen Days from its First Meeting, shall be deemed an unlawful Combination and Confederacy within the Meaning of this Act, and the Meetings thereof shall be unlawful Assemblies.

4 G. 4. c. 87.

III. And whereas by an Act passed in the Fourth Year of the Reign of His present Majesty, intituled *An Act to amend and render more effectual the Provisions of an Act made in the Fiftieth Year of His late Majesty's Reign, for preventing the administering and taking unlawful Oaths in* Ireland, certain Societies therein described are declared to be unlawful Combinations and Confederacies, and various Provisions are thereby made respecting the same: And whereas it is expedient to extend the Provisions contained in the said Act; be it

Every Society composed of separate Branches or Divisions, or corresponding with any other Society, or excluding Persons of any Religion

therefore enacted, That from and after the Commencement of this Act, every Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons, which shall be composed of different Divisions or Branches, or of different Parts, acting in any manner separate or distinct from each other, or of which any Part shall have any separate or distinct President, Secretary, Treasurer, Delegate, or other Officer, elected or appointed by or for such Part, or to act as an Officer for such Part; and every Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons which shall communicate or correspond, or whose Constitution shall contain any Provisions

visions for Correspondence or Communication with any other Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons, and every Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons from which Persons of any Form of Religious Faith allowed or tolerated by Law shall be excluded, and every Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons, the Members whereof are required to take any Oath, or to take any Declaration authorized or directed by any Act of Parliament, at any other Place, or on any other Occasion, or under any other Circumstances than as specified in such Act or Acts, and as required by Law, shall be deemed an unlawful Combination and Confederacy, and the Meetings thereof, or of any of the Members thereof, unlawful Assemblies.

allowed by Law, or taking any lawful Oath at any Time or Place or Occasion not required by Law, declared unlawful.

IV. And be it further enacted, That it shall and may be lawful to and for any Two Justices of the Peace, and they are hereby respectively authorized, empowered, and required, within their respective Jurisdictions, to command all Meetings herein-before declared to be unlawful Assemblies, immediately to disperse; and if any such Meeting shall not thereupon immediately disperse, to apprehend all Persons offending in that behalf, and to demand Admission into any House, Outhouse, or Office, where they shall respectively have good Reason to believe, from Information on Oath, that such unlawful Assembly shall be, and if refused, to enter by Force.

Two Justices may command unlawful Meetings to disperse.

V. And be it further enacted, That every Person who after the Commencement of this Act shall become a Member of any Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons hereby declared to be an unlawful Combination and Confederacy, or shall act as a Member thereof; and every Person who, after the Commencement of this Act, shall directly or indirectly maintain Correspondence or Intercourse therewith, or with any Committee or other select Body, President, Treasurer, Secretary, Delegate, or other Officer or Member thereof, as such; or who shall, by Contribution, Collection, or Receipt of Money or otherwise, aid, abet, or support any such Society, or any Committee or other select Body, or any Officer or Member thereof as such, shall be deemed guilty of a Misdemeanor; and every Person convicted of any such Offence by due Course of Law, shall and may be punished by Fine and Imprisonment, as the Court before whom such Offender shall be tried, shall think fit.

Persons becoming Members of any unlawful Society, declared guilty of Misdemeanor, punishable by Fine and Imprisonment.

VI. Provided always, and be it enacted, That where any Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons shall become an unlawful Combination and Confederacy within the Meaning of this Act, by reason of any Matter or Thing done by its Members, or any of them, contrary to the Provisions of this Act, no Member thereof shall be deemed guilty of such Offence as aforesaid, or be subject to the Penalties herein contained, unless he shall act as a Member of such Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons, after his Knowledge of such Matter or Thing done, whereby such Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons shall have so become an unlawful Combination and Confederacy as aforesaid.

Proviso for Members of Societies becoming unlawful under this Act.

VII. And be it further enacted, That if any Person shall knowingly permit or suffer any Meeting of any Society, Committee, or other Body of Persons hereby declared to be an unlawful Combination and Confederacy, to be held in his or her House or Apartment, such Person shall for the First Offence forfeit the Sum of Five Pounds; and shall, for any such Offence committed after the Date of his or her Conviction for such First Offence before any Two Justices of the Peace within their Jurisdiction, be deemed guilty of an unlawful Combination and Confederacy, in breach of this Act.

Penalty on Persons permitting Meetings in their Houses.

VIII. Pro-

Act not to extend to Societies for Religious or Charitable Purposes, &c.

VIII. Provided always, and be it enacted, That nothing herein contained shall extend to, or be construed to affect any Society formed and acting merely for the Purpose of Religious Worship, or for the due ordering thereof, according to any Form allowed or tolerated by Law; or to any Society formed and acting merely for Purposes of public or private Charity, Science, Agriculture, Manufactures, or Commerce.

Not to affect Right of petitioning.

IX. Provided also, and be it enacted, That nothing herein contained shall be deemed or construed in any Manner to prevent or impede the undoubted Right of His Majesty's Subjects to petition His Majesty, or both Houses or either House of Parliament, for the Redress of any public or private Grievance, or to assemble for that Purpose, or to prevent the Appointment of any Committee for the sole Purpose of preparing or forwarding any such Petition; provided that such Committee shall not exceed the Number of Twenty Persons, and shall not have Power to appoint any other Committee; and that such Assembly or Committee shall not have Continuance, by Adjournment or otherwise, for any Period exceeding Fourteen Days from the Time of such first Assembling or Appointment respectively; and shall not collect or receive any Money or Contribution from any of His Majesty's Subjects, other than such as may be necessary for the specific Purposes of preparing and transmitting to the King, or either House of Parliament, such Petition as aforesaid.

Limitation of Actions.

X. And be it further enacted, That every Prosecution, Action, and Suit which shall be brought or commenced against any Justice or Justices of the Peace, Constable, Peace Officer, or other Person or Persons, for any thing done or acted in pursuance of this Act, shall be commenced within Three Calendar Months next after the Fact committed, and not afterwards; and the Venue in every such Action or Suit shall be laid in the proper County where the Fact was committed, and not elsewhere; and the Defendant or Defendants in every such Suit or Action shall and may plead the General Issue, and give this Act and the special Matter in Evidence at any Trial to be had thereupon; and if such Prosecution, Action, or Suit shall be brought or commenced after the Time limited for bringing the same, or the Venue shall be laid in any other Place than as aforesaid, then the Jury shall find a Verdict for the Traverser or Traversers, or Defendant or Defendants; and in such Case, or if the Jury shall find a Verdict for the Defendant or Defendants upon the Merits, or if the Plaintiff or Plaintiffs shall become nonsuit, or discontinue his or their Action after Appearance, or if upon Demurrer, Judgment shall be given against the Plaintiff or Plaintiffs, the Defendant or Defendants shall have Double Costs, which he or they shall and may recover, in such and in the same Manner as any Defendant can by Law in other Cases.

Act may be amended this Session.

XI. And be it further enacted, That this Act may be altered or amended by any Act or Acts to be passed in this present Session of Parliament.

Continuance of Act.

XII. And be it enacted, That this Act shall commence and be of force from and after the Expiration of Ten Days from and after the passing thereof, and not sooner; and shall be and continue in force for Two Years from the Day of passing this Act, and until the End of the then next Session of Parliament.

LONDON: Printed by GEORGE EYRE and ANDREW STRAHAN, Printers to the King's most Excellent Majesty. 1825.