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1st Session, 6th Parliament, 21 Victoria, 1858.

BILL.

An Act for the regulation of insolvency, and the management and realization of estates under deeds of assignment.

Received and read, first time, Tuesday, 1st June, 1858.

Second reading, Wednesday, 2nd June, 1858.

Mr. John Cameron.

TORONTO:

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, YONGE STREET.

No. 198.]

[1858.

An Act for the regulation of Insolvency and management and realization of Estates under deeds of assignment.

THEREAS it is expedient for the welfare of trade and com- Preamble. merce, owing to the expiration of the Act formerly in force in this Province intituled " An Act concerning Bankrupts and the adminis- 7 Vic. cap. 10. tration of their effects," that an Act should be passed in this present 5 session of Parliament for the regulation and management of Insolvent Estates under the present system of deeds of assignment, and for the more equitable division of such estates among all creditors entitled to participate therein, as well as for effecting the supervision of assigned estates in such manner that reliable returns may be obtained thereof for 10 registration and preservation; Therefore Her Majesty, &c., enacts as follows:

I. From and after the passing of this Act, all assignments of real or Statement as personal estate, goods, chattels, or other effects or assets, or of credits or evidences of debt, for the benefit of creditors, shall have appended thereto their claims to 15 a statement by the assignor of the names and residences of all creditors be annexed to entitled to claim thereon, and the several amounts for which they may assignments of so claim so far as known to the assignor, and declaring the total amount of his indebtedness so far as to him known, and distinguishing debts due within from those due without the Province; also the total value of Also total 20 the estate so assigned so far as the assignor is able to estimate or judge value of estate thereof, with a duplicate copy of such statement in the form of schedule A to this Act annexed; and failing such statement being appended to each assignment, the same shall not be registered by the Clerk of any County or District or be a valid deed to the effect for which it is made 25 or granted.

II. No clause in any deed of assignment shall be valid, which in any Preferential wise grants by the assignor any preference to any one or more creditors assignments over others, nor shall any assignee or assignees give effect to any such clause if contained therein, under penalty of personally refunding the 30 amount of any such preference to the estate, on the suit of any creditor entitled to claim under the assignment, who shall also be entitled to recover from the assignee personally his costs in any such suit.

III. But whereas there may be circumstances in which certain claims Recital. may, in equity or by the mercantile usance of this Province, be entitled 35 to some preference out of an estate owing to the peculiar nature of their constitution as not arising from transactions in which a mercantile profit was sought, such as a loan of original capital or a direct borrowing of money within a short period of the making of the assignment,—it shall be competent to the assignor to specify in the list of his creditors to be

Assignor may specify what he deems to be privileged claims.

appended to the deed of assignment as hereinbefore provided, such claims as he considers in equity entitled to any preference out of his estate, and such creditors, or any creditor on coming into the assignment. may lodge with the assignee a special claim for preference, detailing the grounds on which he claims such; and, failing the lodging of such 5 special claim, any preference, even though accorded by the assignor. shall be held as fallen from.

Term in assignment within which creditors may come in.

IV. The term to be specified in every assignment within which creditors may come in, shall in all cases be sixty days from the date of registration thereof for creditors resident within the Province, and thirty 10 days longer for such creditors as are at a distance without the Province.

Calling of first meeting of creditors, to receive statement of assignce.

V. On the expiration of the sixty days from the date of the registration of any assignment, the assignee shall, by advertisement and by circulars forwarded through the Post to each creditor within the Province or mandatory of absentere ditors, call a general meeting of the creditors on 15 a day not later than ten days from the expiry of the sixty days aforesaid, to receive from him a statement of the position and prospects of the estate; and, if any preference claims have been lodged, he shall in such circular specify the names and designations of such claimants and the amount for which they so claim; and, on consideration of such statement 20 and explanations by the assignee, if there are any creditors present at the meeting who have not previously come into the assignment, they shall then be requested so to do or retire; the meeting shall then adjudicate on such preference claims in accordance with equity or mercantile usance, and by a majority in number and three-fourths in value, may admit, 25 reject or modify such preferences, as the justice of the case may seem to require.

Preference claims adjudicated upon.

VI. At such meeting, the creditors present shall nominate and appoint creditors to be three of their number as Commissioners to consult and advise with the assignee on all matters connected with the management and realisation 30 of the estate and the division of the proceeds thereof among the creditors, and shall name one of the chartered Banks in which the assignee shall deposit all moneys so soon as they are received, which shall not thereafter be withdrawn except upon a cheque signed by him and by two out of the three Commissioners. 35

VII. At the said meeting or at any subsequent meeting called by the

it shall be competent to the assignor to make offer of a specific compo-

registration accordingly, the said arrangement shall be as binding on

Three of the appointed Commissioners. Their duties.

Composition may be offered assignor, with concurrence of the assignee, by advertisement and circular, by assignor.

sition or dividend on the amount of his several debts, with or without security for the regular payment of the same as he may see fit, with the 40 view of thereby superseding the assignment and resuming possession of his estate, and, on such offer being accepted by a majority in number Proceedings and three-fourths in value of the creditors or mandatories duly authorised to act for absent creditors, such deed of arrangement, being registered in the office of the accountant in Bankruptcy hereinafter appointed, who, 45 on being satisfied of the authenticity thereof, shall grant certificate of

all the creditors as if they had all acceded thereto.

upon acceptance thereof by the creditors.

Re-assignment VIII. The assignee shall thereupon, on receiving from the assignor by assignee, such remuneration for his trouble as the creditors may determine, re- 50 upon such

assign the estate or such portion thereof as may be arranged, to the acceptance. assignor conjointly with his security or securities, if so required, narrating in the deed the causes for which such re-assignment is made, such fessions of deed to be registered as a re-assignment in usual form; and the creditors judgment for 5 on receiving confessions of Judgment for their several compositions or amounts of instalments thereof, payable or recoverable et such dates as the said sitions, &c. deed of arrangement or re-assignment bears, shall grant and acknowledge the same as a full and free discharge of the debt for amount of which they claim on the estate.

IX. Provided always, that if the offer of composition so made is enter- Declaration to tained or accepted by the requisite number and amount of creditors and be subscribed the assignor be entitled to receive a discharge in virtue thereof, he shall assignor, upon subscribe a declaration, or if required by any creditor, an oath before any receiving such party qualified to receive or administer such, that he has made a full and discharge. 15 fair surrender of his estate, and has not granted or promised any preference or security, nor made or promised any payment, nor entered into any secret or collusive agreement or transaction, to obtain the concurrence of any creditor to such composition and the reinvestment of estate fol-

lowing thereupon and discharge under such composition.

ations granted, made or promised, and all secret or collusive agreements grantities, &c., or transactions for concurring in, facilitating or obtaining a reinvestment void, discharge of estate to the assignor and his discharge under composition, whether procured the offer be accepted or not, or the discharge granted or not, shall be null thereby may 25 and void, and any one or more of the creditors may apply by petition to a Judge to have such discharge annulled accordingly; and if any creditor be found to have obtained any such preference, the assignee or any creditor may apply by petition to the court, praying that such creditor may

be found to have forfeited his dividend from the estate, and may be 80 ordained to pay into court, for the benefit of the estate, double the amount of such preference, gratuity, security, payment or other con-

X. All preferences, gratuities, securities, payments or other consider- Preferences

sideration, the accountant in Bankruptcy being notified of any such proccedings at the time of the same being taken, and watching the same in the interests of commerce and fair mercantile dealing. XI. In subsequent actions at law for the recovery of debt, against any Assignment debtor who has made an assignment and full and fair surrender of his ed in actions estate for the benefit of all his creditors, which debt was contracted and atlaw, and, subsisting previous to such assignment, it shall be competent for such evidence debtor to plead his having so made an assignment, if not in bar of judg-the probable 40 ment, at least in mitigation of damages, and to adduce evidence of such dividend,

assignment, and the dividend to be made or likely to be realized to his adduced in

creditors therein, and also of what property he may subsequently have mitigation of damages. acquired, if such acquisition is alleged; and the Judge may, on consideration of the premises, adjudge or recommend to the Jury such mitigation 45 of damages as he may in the circumstances think fit, and the decision if not appealed, shall have the effect of causing such action for debt to become res judicata.

XII. Should any doubt be had as to the bona fides of any claim upon Bona fides of an estate, the claimant may be required by the assignee or any co-creditor tablished. 50 to make oath to the verity thereof before a magistrate, before whom he may also be examined on oath touching such claim, or any matter relating thereto.

Assignor may be examined as to his assignment being a full and fair surrender of his estate.

XIII. In like manner any assignor may be examined on oath touching his assignment and the same being a full and fair surrender of all his estate for the benefit of his creditors, or touching any preferences he may have made, or transference of any property within sixty days of the making of such assignment, or the payment or transference of any money otherwise than in the discharge of a bona fide debt or obligation; and where any collusive malversation is discovered, the assignee shall be entitled to sue for its amount in like manner as for any debt due to the estate, or for double the amount of any preference as hereinbefore provided. 10

Questions at determined by a majority in value of cre-

XIV. All questions at any meeting of creditors shall be determined by meetings to be the majority in value of those present and entitled to vote, unless in cases herein otherwise provided for; and when for the purpose of voting, the creditors are required to be counted in number, no creditor whose ditors present, debt is under one hundred dollars, shall be reckoned in number, but his 15 debt shall be computed in value.

Effect of general assignments, as resale, chattel mortgages, &c.

XV. No bill of sale, chattel mortgage, or other instrument whereby an exclusive right of property is created or attempted to be created, in gards' Bills of goods, chattels or other effects of which the grantor still retains possession, and no confession of judgment or execution following thereon, except 20 for rent, or for a less amount than one hundred dollars, shall be effectual for the benefit of any creditor or creditors over a general body of creditors, but all such instruments or proceedings may and shall be superseded by an assignment for the general benefit of creditors within days of the date, registration or execution of such. 25

XVI. It shall be competent to any creditor or creditors whose claim or

Creditors in certain cases may compel a

united claims amount to five hundred dollars, to challenge any such debtor to make deeds or proceedings, and to summon the debtor forthwith to show cause an assignment. why he should not make an assignment of his whole estate for the benefit of all his creditors, and also to summon the holder of any such deed or 30 the taker of any such proceedings, to show cause why he should thereby Judge may de- obtain an undue advantage over his co-creditors; and the Judge on cree refusal so hearing parties for their several interests, or on the failure to appear of the debtor, or execution or judgment creditor so summoned, may order such assignment to be forthwith made, and decree that a refusal to make 35 the same shall be an act of fraud on the part of such debtor, and punishable as such; or in case the debtor may not have been summoned as law directs, on account of his absconding or keeping out of the way, the Judge may sist all proceedings, to the effect of preserving the estate for the benefit of the entire body of creditors, or do otherwise in the premises, 40

to do to be an act of fraud, &c.

Proviso.

ings, shall have such costs as taxes reimbursed out of the proceeds of the estate. Judges who XVII. The Judges before whom any such cases may be brought, shall 45

> be the Judges of the Court of Queen's Bench and Common Pleas, or the Judge of any County Court in Upper Canada, or of the Superior Court in Lower Canada, and they shall be entitled to hear and dispose of the same summarily at their chambers, whether their respective Courts be in session or not. 50

as the justice of the case may require; Provided always, that all creditors, Sheriffs or others who have incurred costs in taking any such proceed-

may decide such cases.

Recital.

XVIII. And whereas it has been the practice in this Province for per-

sons on commencing business, or on obtaining large amounts of credit to enable them to continue in business, from individual merchants or firms. to give security for credit by Bills of Sale, Chattel Mortgages or Confessions of Judgment for such amounts as would cover their whole effects 5 or stock of goods, present or prospective, which instruments by reason of their being dated or registered antecedent to sixty days of the subsequent making of an assignment would still be effectual to the operating a preference out of the estate by the holder of such security, and to the prejudice of such creditors as may in ignorance thereof have subsequently 10 given credit to the maker of such preferential security,—Be it enacted, Concealing that any person or trader who, having given such security, or made any from subsealicination of right of property as aforesaid, shall subsequently seek to tors the having obtain credit from any person or firm other than the holder of such given prefersecurity, or for a greater amount than one hundred dollars, without ential security, to be a fraud informing such person or firm from whom he seeks credit, of the existence and punish of such security, or referring him to the holder thereof, shall be guilty of able as such; fraud, and punishable as the law directs for obtaining goods under false and any perpretences; and any holder of such security who shall be proved to have thereto, to be been privy to the grantor of such security to him seeking to obtain credit also punish-20 elsewhere, or who shall on application to him conceal or denythe existence able. of such prior security, shall be deemed guilty of conspiracy to defraud, and subject to any punishment in that behalf provided, and may be sued for the full amount of any such debt so incurred by the person from whom he holds the security, with costs of recovering the same,

XIX. If any Trader having purchased goods and given Notes or Bills Improper or for the same, shall be discovered to be improperly alienating such goods, alienation of or disposing of the same by auction or otherwise below their value, for the goods paid for purpose of defeating or defrauding his creditor, it shall be competent to such creditor, notwithstanding that the notes given for such goods may accountant in 30 not then be due or at maturity, to make representation of such attempted Bankruptcy. or intended fraudulent disposal of such goods to the Accountant in Bankruptcy, who shall direct enquiry into the facts of the case, and take such measures for the preservation of the estate, for the benefit of all the creditors of such Trader, as to him may seem proper.

XX. And whereas it is expedient that all Insolvent estates in process Appointment or to be in process of winding up under assignment, should be brought in Bankruptcy, under the supervision of a proper officer, alike for the benefit of all his qualificainterests therein, as for the acquisition of a statistical knowledge of Bank- tions, de. ruptcy, therefore it shall be lawful for His Excellency the Governor, by 40 and with the advice of the Executive Council, to nominate and appoint such an officer, who shall be styled the Accountant in Bankruptcy, and be a person versant inmercantile usance and accounts, for the performance of the duties hereinbefore and hereinafter provided, and the said Accountant shall not directly or indirectly, by himself or any partner, practice 45 before any superior or any inferior court of this Province, and shall not directly or indirectly have any management of, or any intromission with, any money of any insolvent or assigned estate.

XXI. The Accountant shall take cognizance of the conduct of all Duties of the assignees or commissioners under assignments registered after the passing with respect to 50 of this Act, or within five years before it, and all assignors, assignees and assignees and commissioners shall be bound, and are hereby required to answer all commissioners pertinent enquiries made by the Accountant, regarding any assignment ments.

with which they are connected; failing which they may be summoned before a Judge as aforesaid, to show cause why they refuse or delay so to do.

Powers of Accountant in case of comor in case of fraudulent conduct on their part or on the part of assignor.

XXII. The Accountant shall have power, on a requisition presented to him by any three or more creditors on an assigned estate, stating that plaint against they have reason to complain of the assignee or commissioners as to the assignees, &c., management of the estate, or of undue delay in the division of the realised funds thereof, to call by himself or through the assignee, a general meeting of the creditors, and to require from the assignee such explanation and the exhibition of such books, vouchers or other documents as he 10 may think necessary, and if such explanations should not be satisfactory to the creditors, the assignee or commissioners may be deprived of their offices and others appointed, and if the Accountant shall possess information that shall lead him on reasonable grounds to suspect fraudulent conduct on the part of any assignor, or malversation or misconduct on 15 the part of any assignee or commissioner, such as may infer punishment, he shall be entitled to give information to Her Majesty's Attorney General, who shall direct such enquiry and take such proceedings as he may think proper; and generally in any matter which the Accountant may deem necessary in the due discharge of his office to bring before a Judge, 20 it shall be competent for the Judge to deal summarily with the matter, as accords with law.

In case of assignee becoming insolvent, and assigning

XXIII. Should any assignee in charge of an assigned estate, himself become insolvent, or make assignment of his own estate for benefit of his creditors, the Accountant shall call a meeting of the commissioners 25 his own estate. on the first estate, or if no commissioners have been appointed, then of the general body of creditors, who shall determine what shall be done under the circumstances for the preservation of such estate, and may appoint another assignee, and elect commissioners who shall take such steps as may be necessary for obtaining possession of the estate, so as 30 the same may be kept separate and distinct from that of the assignee who has himself so become insolvent; and such assignee shall be bound to hand over the estate to such appointed party on the order of the Accountant, who shall keep a record of such proceedings.

Powers of Aclation to creditors out of the Province.

XXIV. The Accountant may in the interest of creditors out of the 35 countant in re- Province who may see fit to correspond with him thereon, make inquiry into the particulars of any assigned estate and make such report thereon as he may see fit, but he shall not act on any instructions either to initiate or superintend any law proceedings whatsoever in the interest of any such creditors, nor shall he represent them to the 40 extent of voting at any meeting as a mandatory, though he may, on special instructions, give in any absent creditor's adhesion to an assignment or consent to a composition, see that the claim is properly ranked, and keep custody of any vouchers of debt transmitted to him.

Previous investigations may te made by Accountant in certain Cascs.

XXV. In case any party or firm who may be unable to meet their 45 engagements but whose principal creditors are resident out of the Province, should consider it for their advantage in corresponding with such creditors to have a previous investigation of their affairs made by the Accountant in bankruptcy, they may present a requisition in writing to him to that effect, and he shall examine into and make such 50 report of the state of affairs of such applicant as to him shall seem meet.

XXVI. And whereas it is expedient that statistical returns should be Recital. had and information compiled of all depending assignments and assignments made after the passing of this Act, or within five years before it, and which may be still subsisting unclosed by a final division of the 5 funds thereof, the clerk of the for the county or district in which any assignment shall be registered, shall, within five days of such Return in reregistration, transmit to the Accountant the duplicate extract of such sisting assignassignment, according to the Schedule A to this Act annexed, contain- ments to be ing the date and the date of registration thereof, the names, designa- made by Clerk 10 tions, and addresses of the assignor and assignee, the approximate of County. value of the assets as stated by the assignor, the number and gross amount of the claims liable to be made thereon, distinguishing the claims of Canadian of and absent creditors, and what number and amount, if any, of such claims, are deemed by the assignor to be entitled 15 to a preference, all which information is hereinbefore provided to be appended to the assignment previous to the due registration thereof.

XXVII. In like manner every assignee shall, within five days after Statement of the meeting of creditors provided to be held on the expiry of sixty assets and liabilities of esdays from the date or registration of the assignment, transmit to the tate assigned 20 Accountant an abbreviate of his estimate of the probable assets of the to be transestate as laid by him before the meeting, the number and gross amount mitted by asof the claims of creditors who have actually come into the assignment, signee to Accountant, withthe number of creditors present, the number and amount of preferen- in sixty-five tial claims, if any, and the deliverance of the creditors thereon, the days after as-25 names and designations of the commissioners elected by the meeting, signment. and the name of the bank in which the monies belonging to the estate are to be deposited, and whether any proposal for a composition was made and what; and failing the assignce making such return to the Accountant in terms hereof, he may be summoned before a judge as 30 afcresaid and mulcted for the benefit of the estate in the whole or some portion of the commission he may have to receive as assignee, and be found liable in the costs of such proceeding, to the Accountant.

XXVIII. Each and every assignee shall, within ten days after the 1st Return to be day of June in each year, deliver, free of expense, to the Clerk of the 35 for the County or District in which the estate in which he is assignee is of to this Act annexed, of the County, &c. situate, a return in the form of Schedule state of every assignment in which he is assignee, which shall be then subsisting unclosed or shall have been finally closed and wound up by a division of the funds or by composition and reinvestment within the 40 year preceding; and the clerk shall within five days thereafter transmit Return by to the Accountant, in the form of the said Schedule, a return of all the Clerk to Acassignments depending in his county or district, or closed within the year preceding, as returned by the assignees, and the Accountant shall cause such returns so made to be regularly bound up and preserved in a volume according to the alphabetical order of places, to be kept at 45 all times in his office, with an index thereto framed by him, and which volume shall be patent to all concerned; and any assignee who shall fail to make such return to the clerk as aforesaid, shall be removable from his office at the instance of any one creditor or the Accountant, or subject to such censure as the judge may think suitable and be found liable in costs.

signee to Clerk

Annual report to be presented by Accountant.

XXIX. The accountant shall superintend such annual reports to Parliament from assignees and clerks, and frame an annual report therefrom, to be presented to Parliament, showing the number, amounts and other particulars of all depending assignments.

Proceedings to be observed upon a diviclared payable.

XXX. When a dividend is declared payable by an assignee in 5 any assigned estate, he shall intimate the same by circular, through dend being de. the Post Office, to each creditor or mandatory of a creditor entitled to receive the same, which circular shall also state that the accounts of his intromissions with the estate, up to the period of declaring the dividend, have been audited by the Commissioners and approved of 10 by them; and he shall transmit to the Accountant a copy of such cir. cular, having appended thereto a statement of the amount of realized funds out of which the dividend is made, the estimated balance outstanding unrealised, the amount of law and miscellaneous expenses incurred, and the amount of his commission. 15

Accountant to have free access to all records of Courts, &c.

XXXI. For the better performance of his duties, the Accountant shall, at all times during business hours, either by himself or a deputy authorized by him in writing, have free access to all records or registers of Courts, with liberty, as he may see fit, to take full excerpts therefrom, and he shall also be entitled to ascertain the amount or 20 balance of any funds at any time lying at the credit of any assigned estate in any Bank, or Branch of a Bank, in which the same are deposited as appointed by the meeting of creditors.

How soon and subject to what conditions divideclared.

XXXII. Every assignee shall be bound, so soon as the funds realized from any assigned estate shall be sufficient to pay a dividend to the cred- 25 itors of 20 cents on every dollar of claims duly ranked and admitted, to dends may be call a meeting of the commissioners, and submit to their inspection his accounts with the estate; and unless the said commissioners shall see any special circumstances which may make it expedient to postpone the payment of a dividend (in which case they shall make a minute thereof, 30 and transmit the same to the Accountant for registration,) a dividend shall be declared payable on a certain day, of which notice shall be given by advertisement, and by circulars to each creditor or mandatory of a creditor duly authorized to receive such dividend and give receipt therefor. 35

Per centage to be set apart for payment of expenses

XXXIII. For remuneration of the Accountants in bankruptcy and their upon dividends clerks, and to provide for the general expenses of the office, inclusive of printed forms of returns and other documents, which the said Accountants may find necessary for the proper carrying out of this Act, there shall under this Act. be paid out of each assigned estate cents for every dollar of dividend 40 paid to the creditors thereon, such payment to be made by the assignee at the date of payment of each and every dividend declared payable, and no other fees or charges shall be exigible by the Accountants, except a charge of dollars for every report sought by a trader or firm, clause of this Act; Provided always, that the Account- 45 under the ants shall be entitled to recover any costs incurred in any proceedings arising out of a failure of any party to comply with the provisions of this Act.

Proviso.

XXXIV. The Accountants shall draw from the assignees and others, Monies accrusuch sums as shall be exigible by the previous clauses, and account for ing to Account the same with the Receiver General of the Province, receiving from him der this Act to from time to time warrants for their own salaries and those of their be paid in to 5 clerks, as fixed, in usual form, and the other expenses of the office, and Receiver General vouchers relative thereto shall be periodically submitted to the Board eral. of Audit. The accounts shall be brought to a balance annually, as on the 31st day of December, and any balance on hand accounted for to the Receiver General.

· SCHEDULE A.

RETURN to be made to Accountant by each Clerk of five days of the Registration of an Assignment.

, within

| Date of Assignment and of Registration | day ,18 . Registered 18 . |
|---|--|
| Name, residence, and designation of Assignor | |
| Name, residence, and designation of Assignee or Assignees | |
| Number and amount of creditors entitled to claim on the estate | Within the Province \$ Without the Province \$ Total \$ |
| Of which claims accorded preference by the assignor | 1 , 1 .1 1 |
| Approximate value of the assets of the estate as stated by Assignor | |
| Signature of Assignor Signature of Assignee | ;, ;, |
| | ompared the above with the copy that it is a correct copy of such |
| Signed, | · |
| To the Accountant in Bankruptcy. | Clerk of |

SCHEDULE B.

Return to be made to the Accountant by the Assignee within five days subsequent to the date of the Meeting of Creditors appointed to be held not later than ten days from the expiry of sixty days after the date of registration of any assignment.

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Signature.

Assignee.

SCHEDULE C.

Annual return by each assignce to the Clerk of , within days after the day of Clerk to the Accountant in Bankruptcy within days thereafter.

and by each such

| | 'sno | iscellane | XI. | |
|--------------|---|-------------------------|---------------------------|----|
| Expenses. | Law. | | | |
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