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An Act Relating to servants and slaves

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Whereas there have been severall Acts provided against servants Runaways which have hitherto proved in effect all in regard they did not sufficiently provide encouragement for such person or persons Inhabitants of this Province as shall seize such Runaways or servants by this Act deemed Runaways thereof for the better discovery Seizing and apprehending of such Runaways Be it enacted by the King and Queens most Excellent Majesties by and with the advice and consent of this present Generall Assembly and by the Authority of the same that from and after Publication hereof no servant nor servants whatsoever within this Province whether by Indenture or according to the Custom of the Countrey or hired for wages shall travell by land or water ten miles from the house of his her or their Master M^r or Dame without a note under their hands or under the hand of his her or their overseer if any be under the penalty of being taken for a Runaway and to suffer such penalties as are hereafter provided against Runaways, and it is hereby further enacted by the Authority aforesaid that any such servant or servants as aforesaid unlawfully absonting him her or themselves from his her or their said Master M^r or Dame or overseer shall for every ten days for every one dayes absented to be Judged when such M^r or Dame shall bring their servant before the Justices of the Provinciaall Court or County Court where the owner M^r or Dame or overseer of such servant shall live during the sitting of the Court Be it before or after the Expiration of such servants first tyme offowed by Indenture or otherwise, and be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid that any person or persons who shall wilfully and wilfully detayne any such servant or servants unlawfully absonting him her or themselves as aforesaid shall be fined five hundred pounds of Tobacco for every night or four and twenty hours that such person or persons shall give entertainment to such servants or servants unlawfully absonting him her or themselves as aforesaid the one halfe to their Majesties for the support of the Government and the other to the Informer or him that shall sue for the same to be recovered in any Court of this Province by action of debt bill plaint or Informacion concerning