

vent the exercise of the right of any citizen of this state, to speak, or write and publish, his opinion and sentiments of the acts or proceedings of the legislature, or the executive, or of the public conduct of any of the members thereof, or of any person in the judicial department or holding any office in this state, it being the wish and desire of this assembly to encourage a free enquiry into the public conduct of every person intrusted by the people, as the best means to secure the freedom of this republic, and the good and faithful conduct of its trustees and servants.

CHAP.  
XXVIII.

VI. **And**, Whereas several citizens of this state have been suspected of purchasing provisions for the use of the enemy, and of clandestinely trading with them :

VII. **Be it enacted**, That on complaint made to the governor and the council, any one of the judges of the general court, lieutenant or militia field officer, that the general conduct of any person within this state is such, that there is just reason to suspect him of buying provisions for the enemy, or of clandestinely trading with them, it shall and may be lawful for the governor and the council, any one of the judges of the general court, or any lieutenant or militia field officer, and they are hereby required, to issue their warrant to any sheriff, or other person by them appointed, to apprehend such person; and to bring him before any or either of the persons aforesaid; and if it shall appear, upon due examination, either by the oath or affirmation of one or more credible witness or witnesses, or by any letter or written paper purporting such correspondence, or by any invoice of any goods, wares, or merchandise, that such person corresponds, buys provisions for, or trades with the enemy, such person shall be committed to the gaol of his county, by any or either of the persons aforesaid, there to remain, without bail, until the next general or county court where the party offending is apprehended (unless admitted to bail by any of the persons aforesaid) there to take his trial by due course of law.

Persons trading with the enemy to be committed, &c.

VIII. **And be it enacted**, That if any person shall be found corresponding, buying provisions for, or trading with the enemy, in this state or elsewhere, and shall be convicted thereof in the general or any county court, by the oath or affirmation of one or more credible witness or witnesses, or by any letter or paper purporting any intelligence or correspondence, or by any invoice of goods, wares, or merchandise, such person shall be adjudged guilty of misprision of treason, and shall suffer imprisonment during the war, and forfeit to this state one half of his lands and tenements, goods and chattels; provided that persons corresponding or transacting business with the enemy, first having obtained the permission of the governor and the council, or of some general officer in the service of the United States, in writing, shall not be deemed to be comprehended within the intention of this act.

Adjudged guilty of misprision of treason, &c.

IX. **And**, in order that proper information may be obtained, **Be it enacted**, That the governor and the council, any one of the judges of the general court, or any lieutenant or militia field officer, be and they are hereby empowered, whenever the same shall be necessary, to issue their warrant, directed to the sheriff, or any constable of any city, town,

Papers may be seized, &c.