

ACT No. XX. OF 1841.

*Passed by the Right Hon'ble the Governor General of India in Council,
on the 6th of September, 1841.*

AN Act for facilitating the collection of Debts on successions, and for the security of parties paying debts to the Representatives of deceased persons.

I. Whereas it is expedient to provide greater security for persons paying to the Representatives of deceased Hindoos, Mahomedans, and others not usually designated as British Subjects, debts which are payable in respect of the Estates of such deceased persons, and to facilitate the collection of such debts by removing all doubts as to the legal title to demand and receive the same:—

It is hereby enacted, that no debtor of any deceased person shall be compelled in any Court of Law to pay his debt to any person claiming to be entitled to the effects of any deceased person or any part thereof, except on the production of a certificate to be obtained in manner hereinafter mentioned, or of a Probate or Letters of Administration, unless the Court shall be of opinion that payment of the debt is withheld from fraudulent or vexatious motives, and not from any reasonable doubt as to the party entitled.

No debt recoverable without a certificate.

II. And it is hereby enacted, that the Zillah or District Court within the jurisdiction of which any part of the property of the deceased may be found shall have authority to grant a certificate under this Act. The applicant in his petition shall set forth his title. The Judge shall issue notice of application, inviting claimants, and fixing a day for hearing the petition, and upon the appointed day, or as soon after as may be convenient shall determine the right to the certificate, and grant the same accordingly.

Manner of obtaining certificate.

III. And it is hereby enacted, that the certificate of the District or Zillah Judge shall be conclusive of the representative title against all debtors to the deceased, and shall afford full indemnity to all debtors paying their debts to the person in whose favor the certificate has been granted.

Effect of certificate.

IV. And it is hereby enacted, that the District or Zillah Judge may take such security as he shall think necessary from any person to whom he shall grant a certificate for rendering an account of debts received by him

Security taken from grantee of certificate.

him, and for indemnity of persons who may be entitled to the whole or any part of the monies received by virtue of such certificate, whose right to recover the same by regular suit against the holder of the certificate is not affected by this Act.

Decision of Judge how far final.

V. And it is hereby enacted, that the granting of such certificate may be suspended by an appeal to the Court of Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, which Court may declare the party to whom the certificate should be granted, or may direct such further proceedings for the investigation of the title as it shall think fit. The Court may also upon petition, after a certificate shall have been granted by the District or Zillah Judge, grant a fresh certificate in supersession of the certificate granted by the District or Zillah Judge, and such fresh certificate shall not affect any payments made to the person to whom any former certificate may have been granted without notice that the same has been superseded, but shall entitle the person named therein to receive all monies that may have been recovered under the first certificate from the person to whom the same may have been granted.

Local extent of power given by certificate.

VI. And it is hereby enacted, that every certificate shall give authority to the person to whom the same is granted throughout the Presidency within which the same is granted, and no certificate subsequently granted in respect of the same property shall be valid or effectual, except as hereinafter mentioned.

Government Notes and Dividends.

VII. And it is hereby enacted, that a person certified as aforesaid, may be empowered to receive interest on Government Notes and Dividends, or on Shares of any Bank or parts thereof, and to negotiate such Securities. He may be also empowered to receive a share of such interest of dividends or to negotiate a share of such Securities. But these powers shall only arise by express words in the certificate.

Payments under certificate void by reason of previous certificate.

VIII. And it is hereby enacted, that where a certificate shall have been granted in cases in which such certificate would be valid, but for the previous grant of a certificate, all payments made to the person holding the later certificate in ignorance of the grant of the previous certificate shall be held good against claims under such previous certificate.

Certificate after previous grant of Probate or Letters void.

IX. And it is hereby enacted, with regard to the property of deceased Hindoos, Mahomedans and other persons not usually designated by the term British Subjects, that no certificate in respect of any such property shall be valid, if made after a Probate or Letters of Administration granted in respect of the same, provided assets belonging to the deceased were at the time of his death within the local jurisdiction of the Court granting the Probate or Letters of Administration.

Bonâ fide payments protected.

X. And it is hereby provided, that where a certificate shall have been granted in cases in which such certificate would be valid, but for a Probate or Letters of Administration previously granted, all payments made to the person holding the certificate in ignorance of the previous granting of the Probate or Letters of Administration shall be held good against claims under the Probate or Letters of Administration so previously granted.

Probate or Letters after previous grant of certificate.

XI. And it is hereby enacted, that no Probate or Letters of Administration shall be valid for the purpose of the recovery of debts or for the security of debtors, after a certificate granted in respect of the same property for which such Probate or Letters of Administration shall have been

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been granted, provided assets belonging to the deceased were at the time of his death within the jurisdiction of the Court granting such certificate.

XII. And it is hereby provided, that where Probate or Letters of Administration may have been granted, in cases in which such Probate or Letters of Administration would be valid, but for the previous grant of a certificate, all payments made in ignorance of the previous grant of the certificate shall be held good against claims under such previous certificate.

Bonâ fide payments protected.

XIII. And whereas under Act No. XIX. of 1841 Curators may be invested with certain powers which are conferred on persons obtaining certificates under this Act, and which belong to Executors and Administrators, it is hereby enacted that Curators appointed under the said Act shall not exercise any powers which, but for that Act, would lawfully belong to such persons obtaining certificates, Executors or Administrators, where a certificate, Probate or Letters of Administration has been actually obtained; but all persons who may have paid debts or rents to a Curator authorized by a Judge to receive the same shall be indemnified, and the Curator shall be responsible for the payment of the same to the person who has obtained a certificate, the Executor, or Administrator, as the case may be.

Curators prohibited from exercising certain powers.

XIV. And it is hereby declared and enacted, that all Probates and Letters of Administration granted by any of Her Majesty's Courts in cases in which any assets belonging to deceased persons were, at the time of their deaths, within the local jurisdiction of the Court granting the Probate or Letters of Administrations, shall have the effect of Probate and Letters of Administration, granted in respect of the property of British Subjects but for the purpose of the recovery of debts only, and the security of debtors paying the same; except so far as is in this Act provided.

Effect of Probates and Letters granted to Representatives of Hindoos and others.

XV. And it is hereby provided, that nothing in this Act contained shall be held to extend to the property of any person usually designated as a British Subject.

Act not to extend to the property of British subjects.