

# American Legal History – Russell

**"Virginia Act of General Assembly, Jan. 6, 1639-40," *William and Mary Quarterly* 2d ser. 4 (July 1924).**

(8) No Debts to be paid beyond two thirds of the Crop

*Whereas* through the great debts and deep engagements of Divers of the Inhabitants, it may be presumed they cannot pay and satisfy the same this present year and will be disabled to discharge them those two ensuing years [?] of the regulation of Tobo. to so small a proportion [?] must of consequence bring a great calamity [?] upon divers poor men even to the loss and hazards [?] Liberty and Livelyhood unless some course be taken [?] redress herein.

Be it therefore enacted for their relief in the premises [?] persons being at publication hereof engaged to Debts [?] their abilities to satisfy their creditors this present year [?] shall be compelled to pay or satisfy more than two thirds of their debts for this present year and for the two ensuing years any further then two thirds of their crop of Tobo. But that it shall be lawful for them to reserve the other third for and towards their necessary subsistence, without any molestation [?] by or from their creditors to which end and purpose it is further established that no execution shall pass against the bodies or estates of any Debtors as aforesaid for or concerning the said third during the time of the two ensuing years.

(9) Tobo. Rated

*Be it* also enacted for the better advancement of the price of Tobo. that no person or persons whatsoever shall barter sell or put away of the Tobo. of the growth of the ensuing year within the Colony under the full value and rate of twelve pence p. pound upon the penalty of forfeiture of his or their whole crop or Crops of Tobo. the one half whereof shall be to the informer and the other to the public uses.

*And* that no person or persons whatsoever shall barter sell or put away any of the Tobo. of the growth of the following year (vizt) anno 1641 under the full

value and rate of two shillings p. pound upon such penalties as aforesaid.

(10) Concerning Armes.

*It is* likewise enacted that all masters of families shall use their best endeavors for the finishing of themselves and all those of their families which shall be capable of arms (excepting negros) with arms both offensive and defensive (vizt) that all persons shall provide themselves as aforesaid with armes offensive the ensueing year, and with half armes both offensive and defensive the following year (vizt) in the year 1641 upon such penalty as shall be thought fit by the Governor and council. And that for the present all persons shall cause their pieces to be fixed within three months upon such penalty as aforesaid.

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