

H. R. 750.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

JANUARY 31, 1849.

Read twice, and left upon the Speaker's table.

Mr. EDWARDS, from the Committee for the District of Columbia, reported the following bill :

A BILL

To prohibit the introduction of slaves into the district of Columbia as merchandise or for sale or hire.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Repre-*

2 *sentatives of the United States of America in Congress*

3 *assembled,* That the business of introducing or importing

4 slaves into the District of Columbia as merchandise or

5 for sale or hire be, and the same is hereby, prohibited.

1 SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That if any per-

2 son shall hereafter bring or import any slave or slaves into

3 the district aforesaid as merchandise, or for the purpose of

4 selling or hiring such slave or slaves, or shall be accessory

5 thereto, the person or persons so offending shall be deemed

6 guilty of a misdemeanor, and, on conviction thereof, shall

7 be fined in the sum of five hundred dollars, and be im-
8 prisoned a term not less than one nor more than six
9 months, at the discretion of the court, for each and every
10 slave by him brought into the district aforesaid as mer-
11 chandise or for sale or hire.

1 SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That all contracts
2 or bargains made or entered into, and all agreements,
3 whether verbal or in writing, when the consideration or
4 any part thereof has been for a slave or slaves, introduced
5 or imported into the district aforesaid, as merchandise or
6 for sale or hire, shall be absolutely null and void.

1 SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That whenever
2 any citizen of the district aforesaid, or other person, shall
3 bring any slave or slaves into the district aforesaid, he,
4 she, or they shall, within forty-eight hours next after his
5 or their entry into the district, go before the clerk of the
6 circuit court of the county of Washington, in the District
7 of Columbia, and take an oath that said slave or slaves
8 have not been brought into this district as merchandise,
9 or for sale or hire, but that they were brought for his or
10 their own proper use, and for no other purpose whatever.
11 And it shall be the duty of the clerk of said court to
12 give the person making oath a certificate, under his
13 official seal, that said oath has been taken and duly re-
14 corded in his office; and it is hereby made the duty of

15 said clerk to administer said oath, and to keep a true and
16 perfect record thereof in his office. And any person fail-
17 ing to take such oath and certificate thereof, and shall be
18 found to have entered this district with a slave or slaves,
19 or to have received such slave or slaves from any other
20 person who has entered with them, shall be arrested by
21 the marshal of the district, or any of his deputies, or any
22 constable in said district, to whom a knowledge of the
23 facts may come, and the person so arrested shall be im-
24 mediately taken before some judge or justice of the dis-
25 trict, whose duty it shall be to recognize said person for
26 his appearance at the next regular term of the criminal
27 court of the county of Washington, in the District of Co-
28 lumbia, in the sum of five hundred dollars for each slave
29 so found in his possession; and on failure of such person
30 to enter into such recognizance, it shall be the duty of such
31 judge or justice to commit him to jail, unless he is then
32 willing to take the oath above prescribed, in which case it
33 shall be administered according to the provisions of this
34 act. *Provided, always,* That nothing in this section shall
35 apply to any person or persons visiting or passing
36 through this district with his, her or their carriage drivers,
37 waiters, or other body servants, male or female: *And pro-*
38 *vided, also,* That nothing in this act shall prevent bring-
39 ing slaves into the district as now authorized for hire, for

40 a term not exceeding twelve months: *Provided, further,*
 41 That nothing in this act shall be so construed as to pre-
 42 vent any person or persons, in removing to said district,
 43 from bringing with them their slave or slaves; and further,
 44 that nothing in this act shall be so construed as to prevent
 45 persons, residing within this district, from introducing any
 46 slave or slaves obtained by marriage, bequest or inherit-
 47 ance.

1 SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted,* That any per-
 2 son or persons bringing within this district, under any of
 3 the provisions of this act, any slave or slaves, shall, within
 4 thirty days of their introduction, file in the clerk's office
 5 of the county of Washington a record of the names, sexes,
 6 and ages of said slaves; and an omission to do so shall
 7 be construed into an intention to have introduced such
 8 slave or slaves for sale.

1 SEC. 6. *And be it further enacted,* That it shall
 2 be the duty of the Secretary of State of the United States,
 3 immediately after the passage of this act, to cause its pub-
 4 lication in at least four newspapers in each slave State of
 5 the Union, and in at least three of the newspapers of this
 6 district, for two successive months; and this act shall not
 7 take effect until the first day of August, eighteen hundred
 8 and forty-nine.