

The Abolition of Slavery Act (1833)

Introduction:

William Wilberforce was gravely ill. Thomas Fowell Buxton took his place in Parliament. The bill was passed on July 26, 1833. It took effect on August 1, 1833.



William Wilberforce



Thomas Fowell Buxton

When the day dawned on August 1, none of the massacre, drunkenness, disorder and reversion to barbarism that the pro-slavery people predicted happened. Instead the newly freed people went to Church and gave God thanks. There were parades and dancing in the street that weekend as the spirit of festivity and jubilation filled the air.

What were the main clauses or provision of this Act?

- (a) As of August 1, 1834 slavery was declared to be utterly abolished throughout the British Empire.
- (b) All enslaved children six years and under were unconditionally free any children born after that date to apprentices was born free.
- (c) All slaves over six years old were required to serve a period of Apprenticeship to their former masters. They were to give forty and a half hours of unpaid labor to their former masters. They were to be paid for any work done over the forty and a half hours.

(d) The enslaved who worked in the fields were to serve for a period of six years (1834-1840). Those who were non-*praedial* (field) were to serve for a period of four years (1834-1838) on the plantations of their former masters.

(e) The plantation owners were given \$20M compensation money to be shared among them according to the number of enslaved that each had.

(f) The apprentices could buy their freedom without the masters' consent as long as they could afford it.

(g) The Planter could also manumit his enslaved worker if he so desired.

(h) Stipendiary magistrates would be appointed and paid by the British

(i) Government to act as mediators between the masters and their apprentices