

granted (pp. 38-39). The failure of Jonas Green, the public printer, to insert in the printed *Votes and Proceedings* of the Lower House for the preceding session certain accounts of the clerks of the Upper House brought him before the bar of the house, and resulted in his narrowly escaping censure (pp. lxxxiv, 23). At this session numerous imprisoned debtors petitioned the Assembly for relief. Many of these had their names included in the bill which was passed for the relief of various languishing prisoners (pp. 9-10, 24-25, 26, 29, 30, 47, 50, 52-53, 68-73). A bill of a more general character for the benefit of insolvent debtors was also introduced at this session, but consideration of it was postponed until the next Assembly (pp. 26, 58). Petitions from sundry militia officers asking for back pay for services in the late war were presented (pp. 7, 9, 32, 53, 54, 55). The committee appointed to inspect the public offices and records made a very full report which was presented to the Lower House on May 21st. This report showed that it had done its work thoroughly. It was especially severe in its criticism of the way in which the records were kept and transcribed in the Commissary's office and in the Land Office. Appended to the report was a very long list itemizing the various libers to be found in the several offices, which is really a full inventory of the public records of the Province (pp. 33-46). This report will be discussed at greater length in a later section of this Introduction (pp. lxxxiii-lxxxiv).

*Legislation.* At this short, May, 1766, session, eight acts were passed, of which five were general laws, one a local law, and two private laws. Only one of all of these may be considered of much importance—that for the trial of matters of fact in the counties where they had arisen, which will be presently referred to. One of the general laws, that to prevent disabled and superannuated slaves being set free, was a continuance of an old law (p. 66). Another act, supplementary to “An Act for the speedy trial of criminals and ascertaining their punishments”, provided that legal costs incurred in the criminal prosecution of negro slaves be charged to the several counties (pp. 82-83). The act for the relief of various languishing prisoners in the several county jails released thirty-two insolvent debtors, two of them women, and was identical in phraseology with similar acts passed at preceding sessions (pp. 68-73). The Act for “reviving and continuing of actions and processes in several of the courts”, which were depending in the High Court of Appeals held in February and in the nine county courts named in the act held in November or March last, revived and continued all such actions to future dates named in the act (pp. 83-84). This act was made necessary because the courts had not functioned during the Stamp Act excitement.

The act “*for the trial of matters of fact in the several counties where they had arisen*” was passed after a controversy between the two houses extending over a period of many years. The Lower House insisted that the trial of facts in the neighborhood where they arose was essential to the security of the lives, liberties, fortunes, and estates of the people, and was in conformity with the British Constitution, and that holding the trials in the Provincial Court in Annapolis was not only unjustified on these grounds but also added