

“are likewise to restrain the unlimited Practice of taking up P. R. O.
“more land, than can reasonably be cultivated; and to regulate
“all abuses therein.”

And this Instruction I had published in the Provincial Court, and recorded there (for whoever peticōns for land, must doe it there) and refused granting of patents to them who I found were not qualified to take up land according to it. And if any have taken up land contrary to the Tenour of this Instruction, (which no doubt, most of the great tracts in Virginy have been) quære whether or no his Matys Attorney gen^l there may not prosecute them. But with submission to yo^r Lordp^s I think that his Matys Atturney, and Solicitor gen^l in Eng^{ld} should give their opinion thereupon: for alas, few or none that practice as Lawyers in these parts, know much, if any thing of the matter. When I was in Virginy, I have heard that it had been a common practice for persons who would take up land, according to the Condicōns of Plantacōns, vizt. 50 acres for every person imported; that they could buy Rights (as they call'd them) from the clark of the Secretarys Office. Sometimes he purchaced them of those who were really imported; and other times would set down persons Names of his own inventing; and sometimes those who brought names to register on the Account of the 50 acres p head, would doe so too. I think a person was once detected for pretending to register the Names of the chief Gentlemen in Kent: by doing which he was found out: the clark either being of that country, or remembring their Names. And no doubt several such Cheats have gon undiscover'd; as allso that those persons who have been really imported, their Names have been made use of several times. An other way, I humbly conceive, to make those who hold great tracts of land, quit some of them, will be by obliging the Audit^r either by himself, or some other person or persons, to find out the exact Number of Acres that every person holds: & make those who have pd. for less than they have, to pay their arrears: which, I think, by Law, they ought to doe: and then no doubt some of them will be forced to quit some of their Land: and so that Branch of his Majestys Revenue about the Quit-rents will be augmented. For the auditor hath seven and an half p cent. for taking an account from each respective Sherriff (who hath ten p cent for receiving the Quit-rents in Tobacco, which is taken at 1^d p pound; and every 50 acres is to pay 1^s yearly) and selling the Tobaccos afterwards for ready money, or good bills of Exchange. When I was in Virginy, I found that the Quit-rents were sold privately, and the major part of them bought by the Counsellors: But the last year I had notice given in in the Provincial Court, that any person who would give most for them, might have them.