

citing that whereas the said John Contee had on the Thirty first day of July then Last past made his Last will and Testament In writing then Recorded in the perogative Court Of This province naming Mary his wife Sole Executrix thereof and that he had well Considered and perused the said will and declared his free Approbation thereof but that before he Could Sign and Solemnly publish the Same he died Suddenly notwithstanding which recital it is now made manifestly Appear to this Assembly that the said pretended will was wrote by a person Verry Officious to Oblige The said Mary in a room Distant from that in which The said John Contee Lay Sick where it was not possible for him to Communicate his mind to the said writer and that after the said pretended will was wrote and brought to him he Refused to perfect the same and Declared his Disapprobation thereof and Could never be prevailed on to perfect the same Though Frequently Importuned and tho he Lived Severall Days after the writing the said Instrument and Continued all the time of Sound and disposing mind And whereas it is Likewise made Appear to This Assembly that the Evidence which Induced The former Assembly to pass the said Act were partial Examinations of witnesses by an Officer who had Certified under his hand in the name of his Office which was Judicial that the said Will was prov'd in Common form before him whereas in truth the very paper Pretended to be the Designed will of the said John Contee being produced to this present General Assembly Appears to have been neither Sign'd nor Sealed By the pretended Testator and Consequently could not be prov'd in Common form without Evident perjury By which and other means too shocking to be Transmitted to posterity but not too shocking to be then made use of by the Interest and Influence of particular persons in power by whose Interest and Influence the said Act past both Houses of Assembly the very next Day after Leave was given To bring in the Bill Contrary to the Standing rules of The Lower House whereby the Heir at Law and other Legal representatives of the said John Contee who were Subjects of Great Brittain and then actually resideing in Great Brittain were Devested of the real and personall Estate of the said John Contee without The Least notice of such a proceeding or Opportunity of defending their Right Contrary to Equity and naturall Justice all which appears more fully sett forth in the petition Lodged in the proper Office and is well made Out to this present Generall Assembly And Whereas Due notice of the application hath Been Given to M<sup>r</sup> John Bruce the father and Natural Guardian of Charles Bruce Son and heir att Law of a Supposed Sister of the said Mary the wife of the said John Contee and unto William Rogers John Courts John Speake Richard Speake and John Neale being all the persons known that had any Claim to the Estate of the said Mary by purchase or Otherwise within this province Or under the said pretended Will, Be it Therefore Enacted by

Liber LL, 5  
Acts

p. 84

p. 85