

part a compilation based on numerous older separate acts, was limited to five years. Incidentally it may be said that the "Tobacco Law" in certain particulars did not meet with the Proprietary's approval, especially in its regulation of the fees of public officers, and that at one time he considered vetoing it.

It may be well to state here that the device so often employed by the Assembly to limit the operation of laws passed by it (the usual period was three years), was in part due to their fear of imposing a law upon the Province to the repeal of which, should it prove onerous, the Proprietary might dissent, and also to their desire to pass laws which it was feared that the Proprietary might dissent to if they were passed as "perpetual laws," as acts unlimited in time were styled. The Acts passed at this session are too numerous to discuss in detail. Most of the laws of a general character were enacted to be in force for a limited period, while practically all the local laws or private acts were passed without limitation of time.

The act providing for the trial in the several counties where the case arose, before two justices of the Provincial Court sitting there, of certain cases which hitherto had been heard only in Annapolis at the Provincial Court, is itself of interest in that the preamble declares that the "Tryal of Facts in the Neighborhood where they arise, is the greatest Security of the Lives, Liberties, Fortunes, and Estates of the Subjects . . . and most agreeable to the British Constitution." Other acts were passed at this session to prevent the smuggling of slaves and servants out of the Province by shipmasters; to prevent the concealment by the finders of boats which had drifted from their moorings; to facilitate the recovery of small debts; to authorize "commissioners to examine witnesses beyond sea and for the easy foreclosure of mortgages"; and for the relief of English creditors in actions against bankrupts in the Province. A law was passed providing for the appointment by the Lord Proprietary of trustees in London to invest the funds of the Province in English bank stock. Similar authority had in the past been granted to the late Proprietary. An act was passed as a special mark of esteem for Governor Sharpe, imposing a duty of halfpenny a hogshead on all tobacco exported as an additional allowance to him; but it is to be noted that the operation of this act was limited to one year, for reasons which seem rather obvious.

Reference to the Appendix (pages 623-631) will show that three acts passed in June 1751 were severely criticized by Charles Pratt, later Lord Camden, to whom they had been referred in 1752 by the guardians of the Proprietary, then a minor, as to whether they should be dissented to or not. One of these involving the title to lots in Princess Anne Town in Somerset County, and another, the act providing "for the more effectual punishment of negroes and other slaves," contained certain questionable provisions. Pratt advised that the