

former act be vetoed on the grounds that it deprived the Proprietary of his right to the quit-rents and the benefit of escheat in the lots in question, to which his charter entitled him; but he advised that the latter be allowed to stand although it was worded in a very ambiguous way. It is of interest to note that at this session an act was passed re-establishing any rights the Proprietary might have been deprived of by the act of 1751 just referred to in the land upon which Princess Anne Town was laid out, and another act clearing up the ambiguities in the law relating to the punishment of slaves was also passed.

A number of laws of purely local character and several private acts were as usual passed without restricting the period of their operation. One providing for an addition of thirty-two acres to Baltimore Town, and another which sought to prevent injury to the harbours of Baltimore and Elk Ridge Landing are of interest to local historians. Bog-iron ore, found in considerable quantities in the sand and earth bordering the bay and its estuaries, was mined extensively, and after smelting, was shipped as pig-iron to England to be used in the manufacture of steel. This, next to tobacco, was probably the most profitable item of export trade. These mining operations along the banks of the Patapsco resulted in soil being thrown into the stream whence it was washed down, filling up the channel below. An act was passed at this session of the Assembly "to prevent injuring the Navigation to Baltimore Town and to the Inspecting House at Elk-Ridge Landing on Patapsco River" by such operations. Incidentally it may be stated that Elk Ridge Landing, then accessible to ocean-going vessels and the site of important iron forges, a few decades later was left high and dry by the filling up of the channel below from this and other causes, especially through cultivation of the soil, and, like the town of Joppa on the Gunpowder, practically vanished from the map, while Baltimore was only saved from a similar fate because of its deeper water. An act passed at this session provided for the purchase of a fire engine for Chestertown and the erection of a fire engine house there. Three commissioners were appointed to carry out the terms of the act, the money to be raised by a levy of twenty shillings on each town lot and five pounds to be contributed by Kent County. Three separate acts for the relief of certain debtors, described as usual as "languishing prisoners," were passed.

Two bills passed at this session and approved by Governor Sharpe are of special interest because they were to receive the "dissent" or veto of the Lord Proprietary the next year and to become null and void. These were apparently the last instances of the Proprietary's dissent to laws passed by the Assembly and signed by the governor. One of them, a general law having a three-year limitation as to its operation, was "an act to empower the Courts within this Province to order commissioners to order the examination of wit-