

factions in the Lower House. Philip Hammond, a former Speaker, was one of the most aggressive and truculent leaders of the popular party, and evidently still a power in the house as he was a member of all the important committees. Samuel Wilson was a delegate from Somerset, the southernmost Eastern Shore county, and one which sent a delegation that voted solidly with the Proprietary party. From the Lower House journal we have no means of judging the justification for the bitter verbal attack made in such a sarcastic manner by Wilson upon Hammond. That the charges went undenied, and that Wilson had the support of the leaders of the Proprietary party, indicates that there may have been some basis for them, as does the fact that Wilson was so relentlessly punished by the popular majority. No reference to the affair is to be found in the Sharpe correspondence.

On the afternoon of December 9, while the Assessment, or Supply bill, was under discussion the Speaker ordered the sergeant-at-arms "to desire the gentlemen in the porch to walk in". Wilson sent "his services to Mr. Speaker and tell him that I am tired of such nonsense". It was then related by a member that on the first reading of the Supply bill when the Speaker left the chair for a few minutes, Wilson, who had in a bantering way suggested to another member that he take the chair, then "turned towards Mr. Hammond, a member of this house and said, there's Mr. Hammond had the Chair once and forfeited it; upon which Mr. Hammond said to Mr. Wilson, Forfeited it! How? to which Mr. Wilson replied smilingly, I suppose you don't want me to explain myself" (p. 92). Four days later Wilson was asked by the house for an explanation of his words about the Speaker and the house. After he replied he was requested to withdraw and the house by a vote of 25 to 22, the members of the Proprietary party voting in the negative, decided that he was deserving of censure; whereupon he reappeared in the house and declared that he had no intention of reflecting upon the Speaker or the house. His submission was accepted, and he was admonished in the future to be more circumspect in his expressions about the orders of the chair and the proceedings of the house.

Wilson's remarks about his fellow-member Philip Hammond "here's Mr. Hammond had the chair once and forfeited it", then came up for consideration. It will be recalled that Hammond had been Speaker of the lower House, from 1749 to 1754. Upon the question that Wilson be allowed to "justify his words" "by relating a private Transaction between the said Hammond and another Person, in Relation to their private Affairs", the house voted 30 to 15 against it; and another motion that the house would allow any of its members to state the case and "make good the Truth thereof" was voted down 34 to 11. When the motion was put that Wilson ask pardon of the house and Hammond, the house divided 23 to 23, and the Speaker decided the question by his affirmative vote (p. 98). This close vote indicates that several members of the popular party must have felt that Wilson's personal attack upon Hammond was not without some justification. Again called before the house, Wilson expressed his readiness to apologize to it, but declared "as to asking the Pardon of Mr. Hammond, I look upon him to be a Person of so very infamous a Character, and charged with so many vices, that I cannot suffer my Lips to belie my Heart,