

L. H. J. house their opinions of the proper measures to be taken to remedy
 Liber No. 52 the evils arising therefrom.
 June 14

Your committee having conferred with M.^r Prigg and M.^r Calder, upon the subject of the variation of the compass, and how the evils arising therefrom may be best remedied, are informed by those gentlemen, that there is a west variation, of about two and an half or three degrees; that this variation is now, and has been decreasing ever since the first settlement of this province; but that the experiments and observations they have hitherto made, do not sufficiently authorize them to say at what rate it decreases. To adjust this, and to know whether the decrease be regular, at different periods of time, they are of opinion that it will be necessary to make many experiments and observations, as well upon ancient, as upon late surveys; and that, when by this, or any other means, the variation of the variation (as it may be termed) or the rate in which the variation decreases, can be pretty nearly settled, it may then be proper, in order to prevent the evil complained of, to have a good theodolite provided by each county, that a true meridian line be taken and fixed in some convenient place, as near the court house in each county as may be, by setting up three pillars of durable stone, at convenient distances, in the plain of such meridian; and that some person be appointed, to try the said instrument, by such meridian line, and note down in a book, to be kept for that purpose, among the records of each county, the variation of the said instrument from such line, which variation so found shall be the standard of variation for each County respectively; and thereafter such instrument to be tried annually and whatever it shall be found to vary, from such first trial, to be also noted down, in the same book, and be allowed in every course to be run by such instrument, until the next trial, and a certificate thereof given by the person appointed to try such instrument, to the surveyor of each County, respectively, and so from year to year. Some such method as this, your committee are of opinion, might be effectual to prevent the evils arising from the variation hereafter; and it appears also to your committee to be very necessary that something should be done to regulate former surveys; but, as this would occasion a considerable change in the situation of many surveys, and be attended with much difficulty, your committee beg leave to offer it as their opinion that it is most prudent to refer the consideration of the whole to the next meeting of assembly by which time it may be hoped that every gentleman will have considered the matter with that attention which the nature and importance of it require, and come prepared to determine finally, upon some regulation, that may prevent an evil that is daily increasing. All which is humbly submitted to the consideration of this honorable house.

p. 519

Sign'd p order Edward Ford clk.