

session in having the Court House removed from Joppa to Baltimore, may have stimulated the people of Charles Town to attempt to make that town the county seat. The petition of some of the inhabitants of Somerset and Worcester Counties to have a town laid out at the head of Wicomico River was rejected without explanation in the Upper House where it was first presented (p. 288). It should be noted that at this session, Stepney Parish had been given authority to build a chapel of ease at the head of Wicomico on its south side (436-438).

*Petitions.* It was early in the 1768 session that the Lower House, by a resolve, adopted a standing rule that thereafter, "no Private Petition shall Pass this House unless the facts therein set forth be fully proved", and it was ordered that this resolve be published in the next *Maryland Gazette* (p. 289). Special committees seem to have been regularly appointed thereafter to report upon the truth of facts asserted in petitions asking for the passage of private laws. The Lower House assessed the fees to be paid to the Speaker and to the Clerk of the house in the case of private bills which were passed. These fees at this session varied from £15 in the case of the Mary Darnall-Charles Carroll marriage settlement act, to £1: 10: 0 in the case of the four other private acts passed at this session (pp. 402-403). The Upper House, as at previous sessions, ordered that the fees to its clerk for private laws be made the same as in the lower chamber (p. 315).

*Variations of the compass.* It will be recalled that variations of the compass with the resulting confusion about land boundaries had been pointed out by Governor Sharpe in his opening speech to the 1768 Assembly as a great evil requiring a remedy, but it was "difficult to point out One adequate and unexceptionable." Sharp asked the Assembly to give attention to the matter so well worthy of its notice (p. 282). On June 8, 1768, the Lower House appointed a committee of nine, headed by Thomas Ringgold, to confer with Messrs. Prigg and Calder, mathematicians, and to report what were the proper procedures to be taken to remedy the evils arising therefrom (pp. 359, 361). The Committee reported that it had consulted these two gentlemen and had been informed that there is a west variation of about two and a half to three degrees; that this variation is now and has been decreasing ever since the first settlement of the Province, but that "the experiments and observations they have hitherto made do not sufficiently authorize them to say at what rate it decreases." To determine these variations it would be necessary to make many observations upon both ancient and modern surveys. After the rate of the decrease of the variation is determined a good theodolite should be provided for each county, a true meridian line set up at each court house with three pillars of durable stone, and the variations as found by annual observations to be recorded in books to be kept among the county records, and these variations to be considered the standard of variation for each county. The Committee felt that as the "regulation" of old surveys would occasion considerable changes in many of the bounds and present so much difficulty, it advised that further consideration of an evil which is daily increasing be reserved for consideration at the next Assembly (pp. 282, 286, 326, 359, 361, 375-376). The