

It appears from the rather voluminous correspondence that passed between Governor Sharpe and the Proprietary's Secretary, Hugh Hamersley, on the subject, that John Stewart, "Contractor for the Transportation of Convicts", operating under the firm name of Stewart & Campbell, of London, and also the firm of Sedgely & Company of Bristol, made strenuous efforts to have the Proprietary dissent to the quarantine law, and failing this, to have the King in Council annul it. It is known that most of these felons sent to Maryland were from Newgate Prison, London, and from Bucks and other counties on that circuit (*Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series, 1766-1783*; pp. 115-116). Sharpe, under date of July 27, 1767, wrote to Hamersley, that distempers had at various times been brought into the Province in overcrowded ships, and that only the preceding autumn Mrs. Blake of the prominent Queen Anne's County family of that name, and twenty of the Blake slaves, had died in the space of two months of a distemper, apparently jail fever, communicated to them by servants imported in a "crowded, infectious ship." Sharpe took a shot at his political enemy, Thomas Ringgold, who represented Stewart & Campbell, saying that Ringgold had sought in the house to have the title of the act changed in derision to "A Bill to prevent the Peopling of a Young Country." Sharpe declared that as a matter of fact few shipmasters overcrowded their vessels, but that the Stewart and Sedgely firms had not enough vessels to carry comfortably more than half the convicts, which under their contracts they were at times obliged to take when the jails were emptied, and that they were indifferent to the consequences. The Governor said that, although the act was in some degree defective and severe, it could be easily amended, and that at the next session he would recommend the establishment of a lazaretto. He added that as a matter of fact since the passage of the law both contractors had already somewhat improved conditions by installing ventilators and ranges of ports, although in a recently arrived ship there were crowded in it more than one hundred and fifty persons besides the crew (pp. 412-413, 419, 421; *Arch. Md. XIV, 413*). The contractors, however, soon began to give up the fight against the measure when it was evident it would be supported by the King in Council, the Lords of Trade to whom it had been referred, and the London merchants (*ibid.* 432, 435, 436). Ringgold, however, continued his attack upon the Quarantine Law in the columns of the *Maryland Gazette*, but in this newspaper war got the worst of the controversy (*Arch. Md. XIV, 421*). There are many other references in the Sharpe Correspondence to the Quarantine Law (*ibid.* 411, 412, 419, 421, 470, 475, 524, 535).

At the 1768 Assembly the Quarantine Law was again brought forward. On June 16 Sharpe sent a message to the Lower House, saying that the contractors for the transportation of felons from England to America had made grievous complaint against the Quarantine Law as oppressive, unreasonable, and cruel, and that he thought it might in some respects be amended. He recommended that the house give this consideration. It is known that Sharpe was anxious to have a lazaretto established. In order that the contractors' views as represented to his Majesty's ministers might be known, he trans-