

An Act for laying a further Duty on Negroes imported into this Province, and for the Encouragement of County Schools: Which was read the first and second Time, by an especial Order, and will pass. Sent to the Upper House by M.^r Mackall, and M.^r Ware. They return and acquaint M.^r Speaker they delivered the Bill

L. H. J.
Liber No. 54
Nov. 8

M.^r Steele appeared in the House

M.^r Ringgold brings in, and delivers to M.^r Speaker the following ingrossed Address

To his Excellency Robert Eden, Esquire Governor and Commander in Chief in and over the Province of Maryland

The humble Address of the House of Delegates

May it please your Excellency,

At the Opening of this Session, you were pleased to say, "that you had only to request, that we would proceed to compleat the Business recommended to us at the opening of the last Session of Assembly." We shall therefore take up that Business as nearly as can be done, in the same State it was dropt by the late abrupt Prorogation. We should be wanting in Duty to your Excellency, to the People and to ourselves, were we to pass over in Silence a Measure, from which so many ill Consequences flow. When we view, as its Effects, a considerable Charge to the Province; a total Stagnation of Business for several Days; Bills of Importance before both Houses unfinished, that must be taken up anew; the Journal of Accounts laying before the Upper House; the Petitions of many People defeated, or with Expence and Difficulty renewed; an Enquiry into the Grievances of others stopped, and the Parties laid under the Necessity either of attending at a heavy Expence, or going away unheard; a publick Offender released, and publick Justice evaded; we cannot but complain of the prorogation as an undue and illadvised Exertion of Power: That Power with which your Excellency, as supreme Magistrate, is constitutionally invested for the Good of the People. Whatever might have been your Excellency's Motive, we may be allowed to conjecture, that as the immediate Releasement of M.^r William Steuart was to be the certain Effect, his Commitment was the true Cause of the Prorogation; and as we are unwilling that our Conduct should at any Time appear to your Excellency in a disadvantageous Light, and think it our Duty to represent to you the Misbehaviour of your Officers, we take the Liberty of presenting you with a Copy of a Report from the Committee of Grievances at the last Session relative to M.^r William Steuart, and of the Resolves and Proceedings of this House in Consequence of it: By which it will appear, that he, as Clerk of the Land Office, by Instructions from his Principals, had taken Notes of Hand for the Payment of Fees according to Proclamation or Regulation, which should happen, and had also tendered and administred an Oath not appointed or required by Law. These

p. 149 [150]