

John Matthews, Esquire, a delegate returned for Charles county, appeared, qualified and took his seat.

Mr. Starr presented the petition of John Purshouse of Baltimore city, praying for a divorce;

Read and referred to the committee on Divorces.

On motion of Mr. Johnson,

Leave of absence from the House of Delegates for one week, was granted to Mr. Sutton of Kent.

Mr. Causin from the minority of the select committee on Printing, made the following report:

The minority of the committee to whom was referred the order of the 28th of December 1841, directing them to "ascertain whether any contract has been entered into for the printing of the present House of Delegates, and if any, whether said contract is in accordance with law, beg leave to REPORT:

That they deem their duty in this inquiry is limited to two particulars—1st. Whether a contract for the printing of the present House of Delegates was in fact made.

2nd. Whether such contract is based upon any law authorising the same to be entered into.

The answer to the first branch of the inquiry is found by reference to the Journal of Proceedings of this House, of April 6th 1841, (page 114 of printed journal,) in which the joint committee on printing report: "That they have contracted for the printing of the next session of the General Assembly, as follows, with Jeremiah Hughes, for all the printing that may be required by the House of Delegates," on terms therein specified.

This contract was ratified by the House, on the same day, by concurring in the report of the committee, (see same page of printed journal.)

The answer to the second branch of the inquiry is as easily made.

By the act of 1831, chapter 303, section 2nd, it is expressly required: "That annually at every session hereafter, the joint committee on printing shall contract for the printing of the next ensuing session."

The House cannot, without a breach of positive law, prohibit the committee from making the contract designed, and the committee by the law are clothed with authority and ordered by mandatory words to make such contract.

It will be seen by this reference that no discretion is vested either in the House of Delegates or the committee.

The undersigned then conclude, in obedience to the order, that there was a contract made with Jeremiah Hughes for the printing of the present House of Delegates.

2. That such contract was in precise conformity with and in obedience to the provisions of the act of Assembly of 1831, ch. 303, section 2. All which is respectfully submitted,

JOHN M. S. CAUSIN,
NATH. DUKE.