

The select committee to whom was referred the memorials of a number of inhabitants of Harford county, praying that a law may pass imposing a tax upon dogs for the protection of sheep, have had the same under their consideration, and ask leave to make the following report.

The committee believe that the laws that are now operative for the protection of sheep, are not generally understood, and by a large portion of the people, are not known to exist at all, and for the purpose of calling the attention of the public more particularly to them, we have given their provisions in this report.

The original law of 1827, chap. 199, provides that if any dog or dogs, shall be detected in killing or injuring any sheep, and the owner of said dog or dogs, shall refuse to kill his said dog or dogs, after he has been legally notified of the fact agreeably to the provision of said act, that he shall pay to the owner of said sheep, double the amount of the value of said sheep, to be recovered with costs—and the supplement, to that act passed 1831, chap. 169, provides that if the owner of any dog or dogs, shall refuse to kill his said dog or dogs, after being legally notified agreeably to the provisions of that act, that then and in that case, the owner of said sheep has the right to kill said dog or dogs, whenever he or they may be seen running at large, or apply to a constable, whose duty it shall be forthwith to proceed to the house of the owner of said dog or dogs, and to kill said dog or dogs, there or wherever else found—and for the discharge of said duties, the constable is entitled to receive the sum of four dollars for every dog so killed, to be paid by the owner of said dog or dogs, and to be collected as other constables fees now are. It does appear to your committee, that the valuable annual alluded to in the memorials is amply protected in the two above recited acts if enforced agreeably to their letter and spirit. It is admitted by your committee, that if the wishes of the memorialists were carried out, by placing a tax on dogs, it might and perhaps would have the effect to lessen the number,—but in the opinion of your committee, it would not have the effect to diminish the evil complained of, for the person paying said tax would be utterly disregarding of the acts of his dog, and thereby it would be the means of increasing the grievance instead of lessening it. It is the opinion of your committee if the law of 1827, and its supplement, were put into practical operation the effect of this grievance would partially disipate—therefore your committee under all the