

the Subscriber's Name Endorsed, and *For her Majesty's Service*; All Letters sent by the Speaker or Clerk of the Houle of Delegates, for the Time being, with the Subscriber's name, Endorsed *For Her Majesty's Service*; All Letters sent by a Justice of the Provincial Court, with the Subscriber's Name Endorsed, and *For Her Majesty's Service*; And all Letters sent by the Publick Treasurers of each Shore, to any Naval Officer, with the Subscriber's Name Endorsed, and *For her Majesty's Service*, shall be accounted only Publick Letters.

And Whereas also the Sheriffs of this Province, whose Duty it is to convey Letters for her Majesty's Service, are very much Complained of for their Negligence therein,

The Sheriffs Duty
in conveying
thereof,

And his Punish-
ment for Neglect.

Be it Enacted by the Authority, Advice and Consent aforesaid, That if any High Sheriff, or his Deputy, receive any publick Letter, he shall, if required, give a Receipt for the same, shewing the Day and Hour when he Received the same; and when he Delivers the same Letter to the next Sheriff, or Party to whom Directed, the Party that receives the same shall likewise, if required, give such like Receipt to the Sheriff that first Received it. And any High Sheriff or his Deputy or Deputies (for whom the High Sheriff shall be Answerable) shall refuse to give such Receipt, to be proved by the Oath of the Person demanding such Receipt, or having received such Letter shall, wilfully neglect Immediately to forward such Letter, as directed, so that such Letter is stopped Twenty Four Hours Longer than it Reasonably need be (Respect being had to the Wind and Weather) the High Sheriff shall forfeit the Sum of *Two Thousand Pounds of Tobacco in Cask*, the one Moyety thereof to our Sovereign Lady the Queen, her Heirs and Successors, for the Support of the Government of this Province, the other Moyety to him or them that will sue for the same, to be recovered by Action of Debt in any Court of Record of this Province; and such Neglect of such Sheriff shall be evidenced by the Dates of the Receipts.

The evil of break-
ing open private
Letters.

And whereas the Trade and Commerce of this Province is in great Measure confined to *England*, and the Inhabitants of this Province of Necessity, are obliged to lodge their Effects, and wholly Correspond with the Merchants in *England*, by which Means we have great dependance upon their Advice, in Trade, and often *protested Bills of Exchange* are remitted hether to, the several persons interested therein, which are sometimes of Considerable Value, and for want of due Care of such Letters in which the same are enclosed, no settled Post-Houses being appointed for the Reception of them, many times sundry evil minded persons find Occasion clandestinely to take such Letters out of the publick Houses (where they are Generally left) and break open and conceal the same to the great Detriment of sundry of the Inhabitants, Merchants and Traders; and many Ill designing persons, who have drawn *Bills of Exchange*, not having any Bottom in *England*, to Answer the same, well knowing and Observing to what Merchant or Merchants such Bills are remitted, do diligently watch the Returns of such Bills from the Merchants, and guessing at some Letters to be the Coverts of their protested Bills, get them into their Hands, and Destroy the same, to the great Detriment of many honest Traders and Dealers, and others concerned; and many Times, others out of a Dishonest and Inquisitive Temper, secretly take and break open publick and private Country Letters, to the great Dissatisfaction and Prejudice of several the Inhabitants, her Majesties good Subjects, and great Delay of publick Business; for the prevention thereof for the future.

Be it Enacted by the Authority, Advice and Consent aforesaid, That if