

and deplorable Circumstances, which are very much Heightned and aggravated by their being sued and brought to *Annapolis* from their most remote parts of this Province, to their Manifest Oppression and Impoverishment; So that many of the good Inhabitants of this Province daily desert their Habitations, and remove themselves to Plantations and Colonies where they are far less serviceable to her Sacred Majesty, and her Revenue of Customs of Tobacco, which calls for some speedy and proper Remedy to be applied thereto. Wherefore this Present General Assembly humbly Supplicate her most Sacred Majesty, that it may be Enacted,

And be it Enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty by and with the Advice and Consent of her Majesty's Governour, Council and Assembly of this Province and the Authority of the same, That from and after the End of this Present Session of Assembly all Persons whatsoever residing, Negotiating or trading to or within this Province, having any Personal Claim or Demand against any the Inhabitants of this Province, wherein the Original Debt or Damages do not exceed the Value of *Twenty Pounds Sterling* or *Five Thousand Pounds of Tobacco*, shall, by Virtue of this Act, be obliged to sue and Implead their several and respective Debtors in the Several and respective County-Courts where such their Debtors inhabit and reside, and not Elsewhere, on penalty of suffering a Non-suit, and paying the Defendant his reasonable Charges, to be adjudged by the Justices of any other Court wherein they shall be sued and Impleaded, any Law, Statute, Usage or Custom to the Contrary notwithstanding.

Debtor to be sued in the Counties where they live for all Sums that exceed not 5000 l Tobacco, or 20 l Sterlings.

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid by and with the Advice and Consent aforesaid, That where any Debt or Damages is Demanded by Virtue of any Bond or Writing Obligatory, the penalty of such Bond shall not, although it Exceed *Twenty Pounds in Money*, or *Five Thousand Pounds of Tobacco*, entitle any Plaintiff to bring his Action in any Court but the County-Court, unless the real Sum in the Condition of such Bond amounts to *Twenty Pounds or Five Thousand Pounds of Tobacco*, any thing in this Act, or any other Statute, Law, Custom or Usage to the Contrary notwithstanding. Provided always, That nothing in this Act shall extend or be Construed to extend to declar or hinder any Person from bringing his Action in the Provincial or superior Court, or any Covenant, or any Bond for the Performance of Covenants, or for the Performance or sufferance of any Act or Acts, Thing or Things whatsoever, although the Real Damages or Sum recovered be less than *Twenty Pound Sterling*, or *Five Thousand Pound of Tobacco*, and so as the penalty of such Bond for the Performance of Covenants, or Performance or sufferance of any other Matter or Thing whatsoever, exceed *Twenty Pounds in Money*, or *Five Thousand Pounds of Tobacco*; but no Bond or payment or Performance of any Bill of Exchange shall be prosecuted in any Court but the County-Court, unless the Original or Principle Sum mentioned in such Bill of Exchange, and due on the same protested, shall amount to *Twenty Pounds Sterling*, any thing in this Act, or any other Statute, Law, Use or Custom to the Contrary notwithstanding.

In which the real Sum is to be regarded in case of Penalty.

Proviso in Action of Covenant.

not being for payment of Bills of Exchange.

And whereas the Justices of the several County-Courts of this Province, by their Commission cannot hold Plea or Cognizance of any Sum above *One Hundred Pounds Sterling*, or *Thirty Thousand Pounds of Tobacco*, and that it often happens that several Persons, inhabitants of this Province, have Occasion to sue their several Debtors, likewise Inhabitants, as aforesaid, on Bills, Bonds or other specialties, and that the penal or principal Sum for which such Bill, Bond or specialty was past, does exceed *One Hundred Pounds Sterling*, or *Thirty Thousand Pounds of Tobacco*, in which Bill, Bond or other Specialty, a Sum under *Twenty Pounds Sterling*

County Courts jurisdiction enlarged in Case of Covenants.