

Publick Letters how to be endors'd, and the Penalty on those that abuse by endorsing.

What shall be deemed publick Letters.

The Sheriffs Duty in conveying thereof,

And his Punishment for Neglect,

The evil of breaking open private Letters.

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That such Publick Letters and Pacquets be endorsed, *For her Majesty's Service*, and with the Persons Name that sends them. And if any Person or Persons whatsoever shall at any Time after Publication of this Act, presume to endorse any Letter or Letters, Pacquet or Pacquets so as aforesaid, which are not for the publick Service, he or they shall forfeit and pay for such Offence, *Five Hundred Pounds of Tobacco*; to be recovered in any of her Majesty's Courts of Record within this Province, by Action of Debt, Bill, Plaint or Information, wherein no Esloyn, Protection or Wager of Law shall be allowed.

And the better to ascertain what Letters shall be accounted publick Letters, *Be it Enacted by the Authority, Advice and Consent aforesaid*, That all Letters directed to the Governour of this Province, for the Time being, endorsed, *For her Majesty's Service*, and all Letters sent by the Governour, having his or the Clerk of the Council's Name endorsed, and *For her Majesty's Service*, directed to any Person whatsoever, and all Letters sent by any Member of her Majesty's Council, with the Subscriber's Name endorsed, and *For her Majesty's Service*; all Letters sent by the Speaker or Clerk of the House 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 Subscriber's Name endorsed, and *For her Majesty's Service*, shall be counted 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,

*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 if 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 Moiety thereof to our Sovereign Lady the Queen, her Heirs and Successors, for the Support of the Government of this Province, the other Moiety 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.

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 re-

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