

this Province; will not the Owners of all such Vessels if the
Petition under Consideration be granted especially the British Merchants
(who may with some Colour of Truth say they have a better Right
to Indulgence since they furnish us with all the Necessaries of Life
& since Lightening the Trade to them is in proportion benefitting our
selves) demand the same favour & thus would vanish those considerable
Revenues to His S^{ty} & his Governor, not to mention the Loss
of Fees to the Naval Officers. But after all if this Tonnage is
too grievous a Burthen to be borne it is in the power of the Petitioners
to relieve themselves from it. By the Laws of this Province
all Vessels owned by & properly belonging to Residents are exempted
from the Payment thereof & the Naval Officers are also
forbid to take more than half Fees on such Vessels, the Petitioners
may if they please find enough of these at their Service, Our Merchants
will be then employed, our Provisions vendid, & the Province
might receive some Benefit from this Trade tho' the Lord Proprietary
& his Governor should not. But not to dwell on this
the last Clause of the Petition does itself suggest the strongest
Argument not only ag^t our lightening their Burthens with
regard to this Commodity but really for increasing them. It
seems that great Part of the Pig Iron made in this Province is
exported from our Coast Iron sold in Virg^a & the Petitioners tell us
that their Officers of the Customs never demand Tonnage on any
Vessel that is employed in bringing thither such Iron from Maryland
whether