

to the same which was granted them.

May 17 1695

Council again debated and was before except Mr Courts and Mr  
Fisher

Presented unto his Excellency by several Persons called Quakers a Petition  
by way of Affidavit wherein among several Articles there laid down they do  
say that they are under an incapability to swear touching or their Country being  
under Scripture of Conscience and cannot swear so that if they see a felonious  
Act committed or hear any seditious words spoken they cannot without Great  
Danger to themselves discover the same because they cannot give such formal  
Testimony as the Law requires and so the Parties escape punishment of such Testi-  
mony and Actions brought against them for Slander or defamation perhaps  
for their Pains & therefore his Excellency demanded if they did not think they  
were Obliged to discover such matters being made privy to them who make and  
they do hold themselves Obliged

In Another Article they say they have not afforded them the Birth Right  
of an English man to which his Excellency demands if they did not receive  
in this Province Right and Privilege equal with their Brethren in England  
Who confess they do but they expected some other Privileges having been at  
Great Charge and Expences in the helping to settle this Government Ordered  
that the said Petition be referred to the consideration of the House of Burgesses  
and was accordingly sent down by the honorable Col<sup>l</sup> John Addison and Thomas  
Brookhelsq

To which the following Answer was sent viz<sup>6</sup>

By the House of Burgesses May 17 1695

As to the first Part of this Petition viz<sup>6</sup> the dispensing with taking the  
Oaths is the Opinion of this House that it is expressly contrary to the known  
Laws of the Kingdom of England and therefore not fit to be dispensed with  
and as to the other part of the Petition relating to the 40 Tobacco Poll this House  
will not make any distinction but continue the Petitioners under the same  
Circumstances with all other their Majestys good Subjects of this Province as  
to the Payment thereof

Signed by Order

W Bladen Clerk of the Assembly

Special Commission for the Trial of the Murther produced and read and  
was approved of signed by his Excellency and passed the Broad Seal of the  
Province