

parish, praying that Anne-Arundel county court may be empowered to levy a sum of money on the inhabitants of the said parish, for the purpose of discharging a debt contracted by the vestry in the year 1772; which were read, referred to the consideration of the house of delegates, and sent by John Henry, Esq;

George Plater, Esq; from the conferrees appointed to confer with the chevalier d'Anmours, brings in and delivers to the president the following report:

THE conferrees of the senate, appointed to meet and confer with the conferrees of the house of delegates on the memorial of the chevalier d'Anmours, consul-general of France, have accordingly, in obedience to the order of the senate, met and conferred with the conferrees of the house of delegates, and the chevalier d'Anmours, on the several subjects of his said memorial, and have agreed to report, that it may be proper to direct the governor and council to furnish the said chevalier d'Anmours with an exequator in due form, he having been admitted and recognised by the United States, in congress assembled, as consul-general of France for this state, the commonwealth of Virginia, the states of North and South-Carolina, and Georgia, and having produced to the conferrees the appointment and commission of his sovereign, his Most Christian Majesty, and the exequator of congress, duly attested by the secretary thereof. That it appears just and reasonable to the conferrees, that duties on damaged goods should be paid according to their value, as suggested by the chevalier d'Anmours, which value, they conceive, ought to be ascertained by the oaths of two impartial men, judges of goods, one to be appointed by the naval-officer, the other by the owner or owners of the goods imported and damaged, and in case of disagreement, the persons so appointed to call in a third person, to determine likewise on oath the said value. That when vessels of foreign nations in amity and alliance with the United States, are compelled by stress of weather, or damage received, to enter into the ports or harbours of this state, to which they were not originally destined, to avoid being shipwrecked, or to repair their damages, that they ought not to be subjected to the payment of any duties but on the goods landed and sold, and if it should be necessary to land the whole, or part of the cargo, to refit the vessel, the goods so landed ought to be stored in some convenient warehouse under lock and key, to be kept by the naval-officer, and subject at all times to his inspection. That when vessels enter into port or harbour of this state for the purpose of trafic, and cannot meet with a suitable sale for their cargoes, and do not break bulk, that then the cargoes of such vessels ought not to be subject to any duties imposed by this state for its separate emolument; and if the importers of any goods, when landed, not finding a ready or advantageous sale, choose to reship such part thereof as they cannot dispose of to their satisfaction, that licence should be given them for that purpose by the naval-officer, without subjecting the goods so reshipped to any duties imposed by this state for its separate emolument, and if any duties have been paid, that the same ought to be repaid to the importer, the masters of such vessels, and the importer or owner of the goods so reshipped, first giving their bond, with sufficient security, to the naval-officer, that the said goods shall not be relanded in any part of this state, and previously satisfying the said naval-officer for the fees due, and that the said goods were legally imported.

That the conferrees are unanimously of opinion, that the introduction of chambers of commerce, for the speedy decision of controversies arising between our citizens and foreigners trading to this state, would be highly advantageous to commerce, by removing those delays, which trials at common law and in the court of equity are liable to. However, notwithstanding the utility of such chambers, the conferrees conceive, that they cannot be introduced into this state, as being contrary to the declaration of rights, without pursuing the mode chalked out by the constitution when any alteration thereof is intended. The conferrees beg leave to observe, that the delays in recovering debts by the ordinary process of law, are unfavourable to commerce in general, and peculiarly oppressive with respect to foreigners; how far it may be judged advisable to quicken legal proceedings, or subject with the consent of parties all mercantile disputes even between citizens to the decision of chambers of commerce, is submitted to the wisdom of the legislature. The conferrees take the liberty to suggest, that in their opinion such a speedy mode of trial would deter many of our improvident citizens from the too frequent and pernicious practice of involving themselves in debt, to the utter ruin of their families, to which practice the present system of law, at least the administration of justice, gives too much encouragement. Your conferrees know of no law authorising naval officers to detain the clearances or other documents of vessels; such usage, they apprehend, has been introduced for mutual convenience, and to secure the payment of the duties; yet as it is represented by the chevalier d'Anmours to be contrary to the practice of those nations among which his Most Christian Majesty maintains consuls, the conferrees are of opinion, that it would be prudent in this instance to conform to the usage and custom of other commercial nations, and to permit the documents belonging to the vessels of his Most Christian Majesty to be lodged with his consul or deputy consuls, to be delivered to the masters of such vessels by him or his deputies, on his or their receiving a certificate from the naval officer, that the fees of office, and that the duties imposed by this state for its separate emolument, have been duly paid.

By