

pearance of Harmony between the Chief Magistrate and Representatives of the People, which seemed to shew itself at the Opening of this Session, we were willing to entertain Hopes of seeing our Endeavours, for the Benefit of the Province, and Security and Welfare of the People, rendered effectual; and that the Chief Magistrate was determined not to be guided by Councils tending to oppress or injure his Majesty's Subjects of this Province, much less to an Infringement of, or Violation to, any of the just Rights and Privileges of that Branch of the Legislature, which, by our Constitution, is more particularly designed to guard against Oppression; and consequently, that we should not have had Reason to have feared any Attempt would be made against the Rights and Privileges and Authority of this House; on the free Enjoyment and Exercise of which, the Liberties of the good People of this Province so greatly depend.

We shall not exclaim against Fate, for interrupting our strict and speedy Pursuit of those Objects, the Security and Quiet of the People so full in View, but leave the World to judge, whether they were laid aside and disregarded by us, in order to make an Attempt upon the Rights and Privileges incident to your Excellency's Station, or whether, for Reasons which may possibly occur to the impartial Reader, you did not think it expedient to divert us from the necessary Enquiry into the Conduct of our own Officer, by making a direct Attack on the Privileges and Authority of this House, from the following Narrative of the whole *Affair* relative to Mr. *John Ridout*.

An Account of the Disbursements of a considerable Part of the 6000 *l.* granted in *July* 1754, by an Act for his Majesty's Service, which was laid before the late Lower House of Assembly by your Excellency, had been for some Time under the Examination of a Committee of that House, and there appearing in that Account many very extravagant and unreasonable Charges, and some for which Vouchers were wanting, it was by that Committee brought again into the House, and was by the House referred for further Examination to the next Session, and accordingly delivered to the Custody of the Clerk. That Account being missing, and a new one of a very different Nature, put in its Place, we judged it expedient, that upon the Appointment of the same Person as our Clerk (who at first View must be supposed to be privy to that Exchange of Papers) he should be at least Reprimanded for such a Breach of Trust, and told, that any future Misconduct must occasion his Removal from it: Upon our Enquiry into this *Affair*, a Letter from Mr. *John Ridout* was produced, and Part of it read in the House, which is in the following Words:

"As the Assembly will meet again the 1st of *July* at farthest, the Governor will be impatient to receive your Accounts fully and clearly stated before that Time, because the Money is all expended. I before writ to you on this Matter, and left the several Papers, &c. which had been delivered in, with your Son at *Charleston*."

As, from this Letter, and the Information of Col. *Thomas Cresap*, now a Member of our House (to whom that Letter was directed) that the Account which had been under the Examination of the Committee, was one of the Papers mentioned in it, we could not but be of Opinion, that the Account which was missing, had passed thro' Mr. *Ridout's* Hands; and as our Clerk denied, that he had delivered it to any Person whatever, and alledged, he supposed it must have been removed by some of the Members of the Lower House; a Regard for our own Characters, as well as the Security of the Public Papers, laid us under a Necessity of calling upon Mr. *Ridout*, to know how he came to the Possession of that Account. Mr. *Ridout* came before the House, in Consequence of a Request made by our Serjeant to that Purpose; the Letter being handed to him, he was asked, if the Name subscribed was his Hand-writing; he said, he could not, or did not think proper, to answer that Question. He was asked, how the Papers mentioned in that Letter, came into his Possession; he said, the Governor's Name being mentioned in that Letter, he did not think it proper to give any Answer. He was desired to withdraw. Being called in again, he was desired to give an Answer to the Question proposed to him before; he said, he perceived by the Date, the Letter had been wrote some Time ago; said, if he might have the Letter awhile, he would reflect upon the Matter; he was told, he might have a Copy of it, and might consider it against the Afternoon. He made no Answer. He was then ordered to attend again in the Afternoon. He said, the Governor had Business for him to do (or, he had Business of the Governor's that must be done) and he must desire to be excused. He was then ordered to withdraw. In a short Time the House ordered him to be called in again; but he was not to be found. Upon this Behaviour of Mr. *Ridout*, so unprecedented among us, and so dangerous in its Consequences, a Warrant of this House was issued to our Serjeant, to bring Mr. *Ridout* before the House, to answer for a Contempt of the Authority, and a Breach of the inherent Rights and Privileges of it. Immediately on the Meeting of the House after Dinner, the Serjeant Reported, that he went to your Excellency's, and at the common Place of Entrance, enquired of the Servant attending at the Door, if Mr. *Ridout* was at Home; he answered, No. The Serjeant asked, if he was to be spoke with; the Servant replied, he was at Dinner, but would

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