

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 the 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 a letter from the chevalier d'Anmours, and a certificate from his Excellency the chevalier de la Luzerne, communicated by his Excellency the Governor to the conferrees, it appears that some wines imported for the use of his Excellency the French minister's household, have paid duties amounting to £.16 10. From the certificate above mentioned it also appears, that all articles imported for the use and consumption of the minister of the United States to the court of Versailles, are exempted from all duties; and the conferrees conceive, that the same exemptions should be granted to the ministers of France and all foreign ministers, and that the general assembly should request the governor and council to direct the naval officer to repay the duties collected on the wines imported by Messieurs Montbos and Latil, for the use of the minister of France, amounting, as above mentioned, to the sum of £.16 10.

All which is submitted to the honourable house.

By order,

W. H. M'PHERSON, clk.

Which was read.

A petition from sundry inhabitants of Somerset county, praying an act may pass for building a bridge near Salisbury, in Somerset county, where the bridge formerly stood, was preferred and read, and referred to Mr. Jackson, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Polk, to consider and report thereon.

A petition from sundry inhabitants of Somerset county, setting forth, that it would conduce much to the ease and convenience of the inhabitants of said county to have a new road laid out by the following metes and bounds, viz. Beginning at Half Moon bridge, on Bear Swamp road, and thence running through the woods till it comes on the lines between Nehemiah King and the heir of William Mitchell, and thence across Trading Branch, on the land of David Wilton, adjacent to the lines of Jesse King, thence into the road leading from Zerobabel King's to Princess-Anne-town, as the distance would be very short to the road as it now leads; and praying an act may pass for the purpose aforesaid; was preferred and read.

The petition from Gabriel Duvall, and others, and the counter petition thereto, were referred to Mr. Coursey, Mr. Scott, and Mr. Kent, to consider and report thereon.

Mr. Shriver brings in and delivers to Mr. Speaker a bill, entitled, An act to enable the commissioners of Baltimore-town to open and widen Hanover-lane in the said town; which was read the first time and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Scott delivers to Mr. Speaker a bill, entitled, An act to appoint a trustee to take care of the person and property of George Shipley, senior, who is insane; which was read the first time and ordered to lie on the table.

The