

Bacon in Trade; and often Protested Bills of Exchange are remitted hither to the several Persons interested therein, which are sometimes of considerable Value; and for want of due Care of such Letters, in which the same are inclosed, no settled Post-Houses being appointed for the Reception of them, many Times sundry evil-minded Persons find Occasion clandestinely to take such Letters out of the Public Houses, where they are generally left, and break open and conceal the same, to the great Detriment of sundry of the Inhabitants, Merchants, and Traders: And many ill-designing Persons, who have drawn Bills of Exchange, not having any Bottom in England to answer the same, well knowing and observing to what Merchant or Merchants such Bills are remitted, do diligently watch the Returns of such Bills from the Merchants, and guessing at some Letters to be the Coverts of their Protested Bills, get them into their Hands, and destroy the same, to the great Detriment of many honest Traders and Dealers, and others concerned; And many Times others, out of a dishonest and inquisitive Temper, secretly take and break open public and private Country Letters, to the great Dissatisfaction and Prejudice of several the Inhabitants, her Majesty's good Subjects, and great Delay of Public Business: For the Prevention thereof for the future;

VIII. Be it Enacted, by the Authority, Advice and Consent aforesaid, That if any Person or Persons whatsoever, shall hereafter presume to take and break open the Seal or Seals of any Letter or Letters whatsoever, not being unto him or them directed, or not having especial Licence from the Persons to whom the same are directed, their Executors or Administrators, so to do, shall, upon due Conviction thereof, either in the Provincial or County Courts of this Province, suffer Imprisonment of his, her, or their Bodies, for and during the Space of Six Days, without Bail or Mainprize, and forfeit the Sum of Five Pounds Sterling; the one Moiety to her Majesty, her Heirs and Successors, for the Support of Government, the other Moiety to him or them that shall inform, or sue for the same; to be recovered in any Court of Record within this Province, by Action of Debt, Bill, Plaint or Information, wherein no Essoin, Protection or Wager of Law to be allowed.

IX. And in case any Person or Persons shall break open any Letter or Letters directed to his Excellency, her Majesty's Governor, or any of her Majesty's Council of this Province, for the Time being, or other Public Letter Superscribed, or directed, For her Majesty's Service, and signed by any Person having Authority so to do, and shall be thereof legally convict, he, she, or they, so offending, shall suffer Two Months Imprisonment.