

250 ACTS OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL (COLONIAL).

1738-9. § 450 *cont.*]

the only ones upon which he can with safety to the country rely. If Smith's revised petition of July is answered within nine months, he cannot complain of undue delay, as 12 months is allowed for the prosecution of appeals from the island.

17 Nov. ———. Affidavit of John Banister, Comptroller of Customs in Antigua, who was a clerk in the Secretary's office in 1735 —about the fees taken there. The present reduction will render the office of very little value after paying the clerks and other necessary expenses. Parts of the docket of 1703 are not legible, and no provision is made by it for many articles of the Secretary's business. Smith has taken only the fees that were paid to his predecessors for many years past. He corroborates the statements made about the rate of coins current in the island.

I. Reasons for admitting Banister's affidavit without examining him upon interrogatories. He is about to leave England; and it is customary for the Council to receive the testimony of witnesses in such cases by affidavit. "Nothing can more evince its being new at the Council Board to examine upon interrogatories than its being impossible after the most diligent search to find before whom such examinations on interrogatories have ever been taken; and though there have been references on appeals to Masters in Chancery to take an account, yet such references are conceived to be similar to references by the House of Lords to merchants to take an account, and which in the one case and the other is always done by agreement of parties, for else in the one case it must have gone to the Master of the Court and in the other back to the plantations to the proper officer there."

1739.

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5 March. [451.] LEEWARD ISLANDS. *Complaints of W. Smith.*  
III. p.498. Affidavit of George Lucas, enclosing details of the account of the Secretary, Charles Hedges, from Feb. 1716 to June 1719, paid by Lucas as Treasurer—252*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.* The fees were the same as those taken by Smith; the proposed reductions

make the allowance not worth the while of any person properly qualified. It was admitted by the Committee of the Assembly that Smith had not created or increased any fee. Lucas also declared that the exchange had risen from 40 *per cent.* or 50 *per cent.* to 70 *per cent.* “Provisions in the said island are so excessive dear to persons who are not planters, but are obliged to buy everything with ready money, that . . . a frugal merchant or other housekeeper of any repute and business cannot live there under 700*l.* or 800*l.* *per annum* that money.”

[452.] MASSACHUSETTS BAY. *Paper money.* B. of T. 11 Ap. representation on a Bill for emitting 60,000*l.* in bills of credit, III. *p.*562. to which Gov. Belcher had refused his assent; and Order of reference, 12 June. The merchants concerned in the trade to that colony, on being consulted, made the following observations:—(1) 60 or 70,000*l.* of the paper money emitted in 1714, 1716, 1720 and 1727 is still outstanding, though the time for payment of the whole is expired. (2) All bills emitted before 1727 should be forthwith called in and sunk; and only so much allowed to be emitted annually as shall be equal in value to the paper currency of later date than 1727 sunk in each year. (3) Care should be taken that the new bills may be fixed in their value and no one obliged to take them at a higher rate. Whereas this Act directed that an ounce of silver should be exchanged for 6*s.* 8*d.* of the new bills, it had become worth 20*s.* of the old outstanding bills. (4) The Act provided that the borrowers repay one-tenth to the Trustees at the end of each year for 10 years (in silver at 6*s.* 8*d.* *per* ounce or in gold at 98*s.* *per* ounce). The Trustees are to pay off half the value of the bills to the possessors at the end of five years. The merchants object both to the detention of the bullion in the hands of the Trustees and to so large a sum being paid out of the Treasury at one time, lowering the exchange to the prejudice of New England and causing a sudden fluctuation. They proposed that the