Baltimore City Court
February 5th 1845

To the First Branch of the City Council

In compliance with your resolution passed on the 31st January last requesting the Judges of Baltimore City Court for information, whether the expenses of that tribunal could not be materially lessened without destroying its efficiency, and whether the benefits derived from the Saturday Courts, justify the heavy expenses which are imposed on the city by its institution, and whether the expenses of the Court have not been materially increased in consequence of the repeal of the act of 1839, and other acts relating to its functions, respectfully submit the following in reply:

With regard to the question relating generally to the expenses of this tribunal, they are of opinion that they can be materially lessened, without destroying its efficiency. If the State would resort to some mode of coercing the collection of the tax for fines, from delinquents, other than by indictment, as all the costs of these indictments are charged to the city, when the defendants are acquitted, and when not able to pay are sent to jail at the city's expense; which amounts to a large sum, as will appear, they presume, on the Clerk's accounts transmitted to the Register.

With regard to the Saturday Courts as now existing under the law of 1840, chapter 9.

The Court are of opinion that this law has very materially, and so far as public justice is concerned, unnecessarily increased the expenses of the City, particularly by the repeal of the act of 1839. Ch 244. by which only half fees of officers were chargeable; and re-enacting the law of 1835 Ch 45. by which full fees, as in cases of indictment were chargeable by the officers, and finally payable by the City to a large amount, - as the magistrates, or many of them, were in the habit of sending up for trial, cases of the most frivolous character, arising between persons of the lowest class - many of whom were rather objects of charity than of punishment, and unable to pay even the smallest fine, especially when the costs were added

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The court feel it their duty to recommend means to be adopted, to obtain a repeal of all the laws relating to the Saturday Courts, and re-enact that of 1839. chap. 229. intended to give a speedy trial to persons imprisoned for want of bail, and relieve the city from jail expenses, - leaving all other cases for examination before the grand jury, as heretofore

Respectfully
On behalf of the Court
N. Price, Chief Judge.

Mr Browning called up the report of the joint select committee on the report and accounts of the City Commissioners and Port Wardens; which was read and adopted.

Mr Ridgely called up the report and resolution of the joint select committee on the application from the Managers of the Manual Labour School.

The resolution was adopted.

Mr Browning called up the report and resolution of the joint committee on claims, relative to the petition of John Curtis.

The resolution was adopted.

Mr Browning, on leave, submitted a bill entitled "An ordinance providing for cleaning the public streets and alleys, in the City of Baltimore by contract"; which was read and laid on the table.

Mr Leonard called up bill No 12. entitled "An ordinance to allow William Price to erect a Slaughter house"

On motion of Mr Harker, the bill and remonstrance against it, were referred to the joint committee on health.

Mr Browning called up bill No 11. entitled "A supplement to an ordinance to provide for the appointment of Watchmen".

On motion of Mr Harker it was laid on the table.

Mr Gault called up the resolution offered by him relative to the election polls, and moved to amend the same, by adding after the word "Resolved" the words

by