

The Committee laid down a rule, in which Dr. Browne concurred, that the transcripts should be exact copies of the original records, and this rule has been rigidly adhered to.

The labor of arranging, transcribing and verifying the materials for this volume, scattered through many books, and occurring in many instances very much out of the chronological order of the volume in which they were found, has been very great.

The copy for the printer was made with the utmost care, and a critical examination of it with the originals word by word, and in a large part letter by letter, throughout the whole work, has corrected whatever errors may have crept in.

During the progress of the work it was discovered that the full text of many of the Laws passed was not in our possession, nor were the laws in the State Archives; Bacon noted many of them by title, but gave no reference to sources; of others which were known to have been passed, he had no note. After a diligent search a contemporary volume containing all the laws passed from 1649 to 1676 was found by the aid of Mr. W. Noel Sainsbury's Calendar of State Papers, in the Public Record Office, London. From this book, a minute description of which Mr. Sainsbury kindly furnishes, we have obtained all the Laws which were lacking for the present volume.

The Committee believe they have now a copy of every law passed in the Province up to 1670 except those of 1634/5 and 1637/8, six Acts of 1647/8, and those of 1659/60, if any were passed in this session.

With the Laws obtained from London the Committee also received copies of all papers in the Public Record Office relating to Maryland up to 1668, part of which they hope to include in the next volume of the Archives.

With a view of placing on permanent record and showing to the General Assembly, students and others what Archives the State possesses, the Committee has had the annexed Calendar prepared.

It is a matter of surprise and congratulation to them to know, that although these Archives have been exposed to many perils, of war, carelessness and theft, so many survive. What has been lost can never be accurately known—those that have been placed in our custody show the Proprietary Record Books to be nearly perfect from 1637 to 1658, the only serious breaks being the period from February, 1644/5, to March 22, 1647/8, and the pages in original Libers F and B which are not transcribed in the modern copies.

The series of the Council Books is the most imperfect. From August 8, 1636, to December, 1671, they lack but little except the omissions noted above, but from January, 1672, to April, 1692, there is no record; from April 6, 1692, to August 16, 1708, they are perfect save the six months between October 4, 1703, and April 12, 1704; from August 17, 1708, to October 26, 1714; there is no record; from October 27, 1714, to December 27, 1715, perfect; from December 28, 1715, to August 17, 1721, there is no record; from August 18, 1721, to September 24, 1770, perfect.