

Letter Bk. IV

Case for the former hold their Commissions under the Commissary Gen^l & the latter under the Surveyor's Gen^l of the Eastern & Western Shores. I have already hinted to you that there are many of the Assembly Men who are not qualified to execute the abovementioned Offices for it is necessary that the former should be acquainted with the Art of Surveying Platting &c. & write a tolerable Hand otherwise there would soon be great Confusion & Discontent. Nor is it every one among them that is able to Transact the Business of a Deputy Commissary. As to the Collection of His Ldp's Quit Rents, that Affair cannot now the Farmers Commission for Collecting is reduced to 10 p^r C^t (which is no more than

p. 115 half of what was given before my Arrival in the Province) be a Means of extending the Influence of Government in such a manner as is supposed by the Plan you have been pleased to communicate to me. The Truth is that most of the Sheriffs think the Collection of the Quit Rents on the Terms they farm them at present a Burthen rather than a Benefit & if the Commission allowed is hardly a Recompence for their Trouble it cannot be worth any other Person's while to solicit those Contracts, I mean any Person above the Common Class (who could not be trusted) for I believe the whole Amount of the Commission of 10 p^r C^t in some of the Counties falls short of £30 stg. a year, a Sum which I am confident most People that can write tolerably & are at all acquainted with Business may in this Country get with much less Trouble & Application than is necessary in order to Collect the Quit Rents. 'Tis true that the Sheriffs have rather too much Business on their hands at present being obliged to Collect the Land Tax as well as the Excise & other Duties but they will be discharged from that in another year & then the abovementioned Objection to their being required to farm the Rents will no longer subsist. As to the proposal for bringing the Sheveralities under such Regulation as that the whole Fourteen may be appointed at once. I think such an Innovation or unusual Mode would be impolitick for as the Sheriffs according to the Plan are to be then appointed from among the members of the Lower House or their near Relations, the Leaders in that House & those who are Enemies to the Govern^t would immediately discover the Intention of such a Step & take the Alarm, whereupon a Bill would be immediately framed for

p. 116 disqualifying every Member, his near Relations & Dependants to hold any Office whatever, the Designs of his Ldp & those here who have the honour to serve him would be represented as most iniquitous & arbitrary & occasion be there from taken to render his Ldp's Gov^t odious to the People. But suppose there were to be new Sheriffs appointed in the several