

Letter Bk. IV Performance & will farm them on the lowest Terms, but at the same time I much question whether any Person will offer to farm them on lower Terms than the Sheriffs & Farmers do at present, for I can assure your Ldp that the obliging the Sheriffs to farm the Rents even at Ten p^r Cent is considered by them as a Burthen on the Sheriffs Office; in every County they would gladly be excused from it, & so much were they deterred by that Condition in Frederick County that the Sheriff resigned his Office last year on that account, & not a Man there of any property could be got to accept the Sheriffs Office on those Terms, so that in order to get a Farmer for the Quit Rents I was actually obliged to give the Sheriffs Office to a Person who lived in the neighbouring County, & it is I find much doubted whether he tho he is very diligent & methodical & has acted as Sheriff & Farmer in Prince Georges County will not suffer Loss by what he has now undertaken. As the Annual Rents in most of the Counties do not amount to near £500 stg the Farmers Reward for his Trouble was he to receive every shilling that becomes due from the Tenants would fall short of £50 at the Commission now allowed & in some of the Counties it hardly amounts to half that sum which is less than a common Clerk in this Country would ask for doing Business; now I have been assured by Persons who have been Sheriffs & whom I cannot disbelieve that notwithstanding all their Diligence & Care they have not been able to collect many Pounds which were due for Quit Rents & which they accounted for to the Agent, many of the Lands having nothing to distrain on & the Owners living out of the County at such a Distance that to go for the Rent would be attended with greater Expence than such Rent if received would amount to, & before the Farmers can get the Rents from many of those who live on their Lands they must often go or send to them several Times, for if they distrain they are often puzzled to sell what they take & that is one Reason why they sometimes suffer the Tenants to fall in Arrear; & if they are in Arrear more than a year the Farmers cannot it seems distrain at all. If your Ldp is desirous that a Tryal should be now made to reduce the Farmers Commission, the Way in my opinion the most likely to succeed would be to let any one that was willing to devote himself altogether to such Business farm two three or even four Counties so that his Commissions may still amount to something considerable & let the Agent be instructed to endeavour to find out such Men in different parts of the Province as I also if the Scheme be approved of will do, & as an Encouragement to Persons to undertake & to quit other Business on that Account the Contract might be made with them for a longer Term than three years, & tho