

Lionel Copley was commissioned Royal Governor by the King, May 10, 1691, but did not reach Maryland until the following spring. By orders of the King in Council, dated June 27, and August 26, 1691, Copley was to be Keeper of the Great Seal and was given power to organize courts of law and equity, but was directed not to erect any new courts without special orders from the King (*Arch. Md.*, viii, 265-266, 276).

The Privy Council, January 7, 1691/2, ordered that new seals of a different design, which are described in the orders, be provided for the Chancellor and for the Principal Secretary to replace those used during the Proprietary period. Probably to indicate its inferior status as compared with the Great Seal of England, in the orders of the Privy Council it is directed that a new "Broad Seal" be sent to Copley and a new Lesser Seal to Sir Thomas Lawrence, who had been appointed October 8, 1692, by the King as Principal Secretary. The receipt of the new Broad Seal was acknowledged by the Council of Maryland, October 1, 1692 (*Arch. Md.*, viii, 285, 297, 371).

It would seem that after the Proprietary government came to an end in 1689, both law and equity cases were heard in the same court and that the records, such as they were, were kept together, for at a Council held August 16, 1692, it is recorded that "His Excellency informs the Board that for the better and more effectual management and dispatch of Business he had thought fit wholly to separate and keep apart the Chancery Office and Records from those of the Provincially Court, wherefore he thinks it reasonable, and moves the opinion and advice of this Board in settling the fees belonging to the said Office upon the Person who shall for the time being be employed or empowered to manage and execute the same which is unanimously allowed and approved of" (*Arch. Md.*, viii, 356).

This order of the Maryland Council aroused the ire of the new Secretary, Sir Thomas Lawrence, who arrived in Maryland, September 16, 1692, and at once protested violently to the King in Council that he had been thus deprived of sundry fees hitherto the right of the Secretary under the acts of the Assembly, and declared that "His Excellency notwithstanding by a single Order of Council dated the 17th of August 1692, hath thought fitt, contrary to that Law to appoint that all the Writts called Chancery Writts, always issuable, and now going out of the Secretary's Office should thenceforth issue out of Chancery, and the Fees thereunto belonging to be paid to the present Chancelor (now Colonel Nehemiah Blakiston) who of a bare ministerial Officer and Keeper of the Seal, as by his Fees in the late Law sett down appears, is now made sole Judge in Chancery, though at the same time, he sits next Commissioner to the Governor in the Provincially Court, Supreme Court of Common Law, which said Order though not yet put in execution, is by another late Order affirmed to be fitt and just, but referred to the next Sessions in April following" (*Arch. Md.*, viii, 451). The Assembly does not appear, however, to have confirmed the action of the Council. At a session of the Court of Chancery held, August 23, 1693, Blakiston presided as "Chief Judge in Equity", with three associate judges (*Chanc. Proc. Liber C. D.*, 282). This is the first instance in which a Chancellor, who was not at the same time Governor, presided as Chancellor and Chief Judge in the Court of Chancery.