

make use of certain copies of the Maryland laws in their possession with a view to the compilation of "a complete abridgement of all the Laws in force in this Province", although the publication of his sumptuous *Laws of Maryland at Large* did not actually issue from the Green press until 1765. This volume of the *Archives* discloses an attempt on the part of others to filch from Bacon his cherished plan to publish the laws of the Province, for on February 16, 1758, there was presented to the Upper House "the Petition of Thomas Clark and George Scott, setting forth that having spent some Time in collecting the public Laws of this Province, which they propose to print in one Volume with marginal Notes thereto, they pray that some Encouragement may be given them by the Legislature towards the Publication of the same; referred to the Consideration of the Lower House, and sent by Daniel Dulany Esq." to the Lower House. The petition does not disclose by whom the laws were to be printed. In the Lower House it was read and ordered to lie on the table (pp. 414, 435). That Bacon was stirred into prompt action by this projected trespass upon his preserves is indicated by the following entry, under date of April 3, 1758, in the Proceedings of the Lower House at its next session: "William Goldsborough, Esq; from the Upper House, delivers to Mr. Speaker, a Petition of Thomas Bacon, Clerk, Rector of St. Peter's Parish in Talbot County; Indorsed, "By the Upper House of Assembly, 3d April, 1758, Read and Referred to the Consideration of the Lower House of Assembly; which Petition was Read here, and Ordered to lie on the Table" (p. 560). Although the endorsements show that it had been read in the Upper House on the same day that it reached the Lower body, the Proceedings of the Upper House do not reveal its nature or in fact make any mention of it. One suspects that Bacon had good friends in both houses and had made a plea, and a successful one, in behalf of a work which was then nearing completion. In the *Maryland Gazette* for June 22, 1758, he advertised his proposals for its publication, announcing that he had unsuccessfully petitioned the Assembly at its last session for encouragement "to publish a Body of Laws". The story of Bacon and his "Laws" is admirably told in Lawrence C. Wroth's *A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland* (pp. 95-110), although the author could have had no knowledge of this attempt by others to forestall him. Nothing has been learned of Thomas Clark and George Scott, who sought to anticipate Bacon, except that there were men of these names at that time in Prince George's County, both probably lawyers. In 1729, a Thomas Clarke had been admitted to practice before the Court of Appeals (Bond's *Proceedings of the Maryland Court of Appeals*, 1695-1729, p. 622).

#### THE LOAN OFFICE OR OFFICE FOR EMITTING BILLS OF CREDIT

It was customary for the two houses to appoint a joint committee to examine the accounts of the trustees or commissioners of the "Office for Emitting Bills of Credit". This was also known as the "Paper Currency Office", or more familiarly as the "Loan Office". It was the custodian of all taxes collected for the Province, and it issued paper currency secured by the various taxes authorized by the Assembly and by mortgages on land. In order that the public