

blies, which assumed the right, often at the expense of the legal claims of Crown or overlord, to act as trustees for all the inhabitants of their several provinces. The conflict between these two philosophies of government noted by Professor Andrews continues to be further emphasized in the period covered by this volume. But whichever view our background, prejudices, and sympathies cause us to espouse, there can be little excuse for the bad manners and unfairness shown by the Lower House in Maryland towards its opponents, or for the shortsighted and uncompromising attitude of the Proprietary.

Of especial interest is the claim set up by the Lower House at this time to the powers of the House of Commons in England. When this claim was rejected in its entirety in 1759 by Charles Pratt, the Attorney-General of the Crown, who declared that the British government would never consider such a pretension, the Lower House, to discredit this opinion, employed the sophistry that he had given the opinion as the counsel for Lord Baltimore and not as the Attorney-General of the Crown. These struggles between the Lord Proprietary and the people were soon to be extended as a result of the Stamp act to a struggle between the people and the prerogative of the Crown—although for reasons of expediency, the colonies sought to make Parliament, and not the Crown, the scapegoat. To students of American colonial constitutional history, these records will prove illuminating.

Throughout this period Frederick, sixth Lord Baltimore, was the Lord Proprietary. The Calvert line had, during the preceding century, shown steady deterioration, and Frederick, a non-resident landlord and a self-indulgent weakling, was interested only in the revenue which he was able to extract from the people of his Province, and in the offices and benefices which he could fill with his favorites. He left the handling of Maryland affairs largely to his nephew, Secretary Cecilius Calvert, who, like his patron, never visited the Province. It was through Cecilius that Governor Horatio Sharpe conducted most of his correspondence on Maryland affairs, although occasional letters from Frederick to Sharpe show considerable familiarity on his part with the details of administration. In such matters Frederick was no fool, although he exhibited complete absence of foresight by a foolish and unyielding assertion of his prerogative, which completely alienated the people of Maryland and did much to mould their attitude towards revolution. The proceedings of these six sessions of the General Assembly are a continuous record of the contest between the people and the claims of Proprietary prerogative.

There was a change of sovereigns during this period. On October 25, 1760, George II died and was succeeded by his grandson, George III, and on January 26, 1761, when the news reached Maryland, Governor Sharpe proclaimed the new King. All public officials of the Province were then required to take the oath of allegiance to the new sovereign, as were the members of the Assembly, when it met April 13, 1761, at its next session.