

under highly diversified circumstances. I think you will agree with **me that a much greater degree of uniformity is needed in Maryland.** I believe that with your cooperative effort this highly desirable purpose will be accomplished within the next few years. I know that it was largely as a result of the energy and enterprise of this Association that a few years ago our laws relating to the office of clerk of court were amended to bring about a greater degree of uniformity. You are to be highly commended for this service to your State.

And while you work diligently to procure legislation to improve your offices and the functions they perform, you also, to my certain **knowledge, work just as diligently to defeat legislation which you believe will adversely affect that office and impair its functions.** I recall letters I received last winter, during the session of the General Assembly, from the president of this Association and from many of **you as members of it.** You were concerned about a bill which, although drafted to affect only one county, you felt presented a threat in that it represented a foot-in-the-door device that could destroy the law regarding State licenses and undermine your efforts **to maintain uniformity in all the clerks offices of the State.** You **feared, with justification I think, that if the idea were to spread it would place a serious financial problem upon the clerks of court, and you pointed out that it would materially reduce State revenues.** Well, as you know the bill expired. And I may say that I was quite prepared to veto it had it passed the two chambers. This is but one example of the good work that can be accomplished by concerted action and cooperative effort on the part of the members of this Maryland Court Clerks Association.

But as important as it is, vigilance over legislation is not the only, and is perhaps not the most important, benefit you have derived from organizing yourselves into an association. Its existence could be justified alone by the fact that it gives you, as elected officials of different jurisdictions, the opportunity to become better acquainted with one another. You collect fees and licenses; you keep records; you issue licenses for state and county; you are trust officers for the proper administration of your offices.

I could not begin to list all that you do and all that you are required to do. With it all, I know that you are proud to be clerks of courts. For it is indeed an ancient and honorable office—a respectable and a respected position.

In our judicial system, you occupy a post of primary importance,