

and Justices of the Peace and Judges of the Quorum", as they were called, was much prized, and most of the justices attended in the counties although no adequate money compensation was paid them for it. Justices to travel to Annapolis to sit on the Provincial Court were not so easily obtained,²⁴ and for a while there was a falling off in the quality of the court. It was, however, held relatively the most important court, and during the greater part of its career outstanding names of provincial history are found at the head of the records of its sessions.

The country gentlemen were thus largely depended upon in England, in provincial Maryland they were entirely depended upon for presiding judges. It was of course impossible to have itinerant professional judges from Westminster come to sit here on circuit, according to the practice in England,²⁵ and the amount of judicial business seemed too small to justify maintaining local professional lawyers on the bench. Therefore, throughout the provincial period the courts were all regularly presided over by non-professional judges. This does not mean that the province had for its judges men entirely incapable of passing upon questions of law which came before them. In the first place, laymen though these men were, many of them knew some law. It seems clear that the leading men of the period did not abandon all knowledge and judgment in the law to the professional lawyers as laymen do in the more complex modern world. They made an effort to equip

24. Mereness, 249, 253.

25. It was once suggested by way of a threat. Mereness, 236.