

strange as it may seem that one branch of the government should receive an accounting of time from another, the reports appear to have been regularly furnished. Not all of them have been found, but those examined show that not over seventy-five days in a year were devoted to attendance at Annapolis. At the December term of 1838, which lasted until February 16, 1839, there were forty-eight days of sessions; and it was reported that Judges Buchanan, Stephen and Archer had been present on forty-two, Judge Dorsey on forty, Judge Chambers on thirty-nine, and Judge Spence on thirty. And the December term was always much the longer term. Sessions on the Eastern Shore were usually less than a week in length.

Even at the highest speed permitted under the rules, however, cases would not progress rapidly according to modern notions. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century cases on the Western Shore regularly stood for argument at the third term, counting that at which they were filed; and as there were two terms in a year this meant that cases would ordinarily abide on the docket untouched for about a year after arrival. Unusual need of dispatch in particular cases was met by advancement to a special docket of cases to be heard early, out of place. And, beginning with an act of 1831, cases of special kinds were required by legislative enactments to be disposed of at the first term to which the appeals were taken; these were: petitions for freedom of negroes, appeals from decisions of the Orphans