

there are functioning approximately seventy-five trial magistrates where formerly two hundred and seventy-six justices of the peace held forth. Thus at one step there was eliminated two hundred unnecessary justices, whose income depended upon the number of cases they tried and whose practices gave rise to a description that they were "mushroom courts."

Contrary to reports, which have been published, there will not be two sets of magistrates being paid throughout the State. Almost all of the magistrates under the old system were on a fee basis. That is to say, they were paid according to the number of cases they tried. While, technically speaking, their commissions may still be in force, nevertheless it is not proposed to refer cases to them and, hence, this great majority will not have to be paid.

In order to ascertain the exact number who might have to be paid, a check-up has just been completed by a representative of the Commission headed by Judge Hammond Urner, formerly of the Court of Appeals, and who, with other lawyers appointed to his Commission, prepared the bill which is now the Trial Magistrates law. This check-up reveals that only in thirteen instances are salaries provided for justices under the old system, and it is not certain that all of those thirteen will insist upon being paid, when there is no need of work from them.

On the whole, marked improvement has already been noted in the administration of the lower courts. By reason of an improvement in their method of functioning, abuses which formerly were all too prevalent are now not being observed. This improvement increases respect for the law, and, hence, is of importance to everyone having connection with any branch of law enforcing agencies.

BALTIMORE BAR ASSOCIATION BANQUET

Southern Hotel, December 11, 1939

Baltimore

IT is a matter of much satisfaction that many improvements in the judicial branch of the government have been accomplished during the past year. I mention this fact, in the presence of members of the Bar of Baltimore City, because I am frank to admit that your Association has cooperated wholeheartedly in these reforms. Notable among the developments, affecting the courts, are the following:

1. Reorganization of the inferior courts, through the adoption of the trial magistrate system in the counties and the abolition of the "fee system;" reduction of justice courts from 276 to 75.
2. Reorganization of the Peoples Court of Baltimore City, passage of act submitting constitutional amendment; adoption of a Conciliation Court.
3. The passage by the Legislature of act vesting rule-making power in the Court of Appeals.
4. Improvement in the functioning of the Traffic Court of Baltimore City.

Realizing that the determining factor in an improved court procedure would be the calibre of persons appointed, I am particularly grateful to the Bar for their assistance in this respect. At my request, the committee of the Bar