

resent all sorts of centralization. State care of health, of schools, of roads, State police, have all been opposed. It is the part of the archival institution to persuade and to demonstrate that a better and more economical job can be done by a centralized records agency. The rest may safely be entrusted to the good sense of the people.

CIRCULATION

In spite of the continuing and growing difficulties of travel, the number of items used by visitors in the Research Room during the year not only held its own but even increased slightly. The number of items circulated and the number of visitors exceeded the yearly totals in both categories for any years since 1941-1942. The increase over last year is indicated by these figures: visitors last year, 614, this year, 748; items circulated last year, 3,515, this year, 3,530.

Visitors came from twenty-eight states and four foreign countries. It is gratifying, of course, to be of service to residents of other states, but it becomes increasingly clear that Maryland records are almost exclusively helpful to inhabitants of this state. Of the total number of visitors during the past year 452 came from Maryland, while 66 were from the District of Columbia, leaving only about 200 from all the other states and foreign countries. Temporary travel difficulties, of course, work a greater hardship as the distances grow greater, but we should not fail to admit the fact that the smaller population of Maryland and the smaller exodus to the West as compared say with Virginia or Massachusetts, make our records interesting to fewer persons outside the State. It should be noted too that while Maryland's sons have won distinction in many fields, she produced no great controversial figures like Jefferson, Franklin, Lincoln or Wilson in whose official lives there is continuing academic interest.

Correspondence with researchers who are not able to come to Annapolis in person required 711 letters in reply, a larger number than in any previous year. The year by year increase in finding media available to the staff makes it progressively easier to answer genealogical queries, but since Maryland lacks