

ACTS OF ASSEMBLY

The Hall of Records was especially interested in a bill introduced at the 1958 Session of the General Assembly, Senate Bill No. 88. The purpose of this bill was to transfer responsibility for the *Maryland Manual* from the office of the Secretary of State to the Hall of Records Commission. Since 1947, the *Manual* has been issued every two years following the long session of the General Assembly. During that period the Hall of Records has compiled the book and seen it through the press; the Secretary of State has paid the publication costs and has distributed the finished volume. This arrangement was first made by Governor Lane and has been continued by Governor McKeldin.

There have been many difficulties. In the first place, we cannot know in advance whether the Governor will want to change this arrangement and so we cannot begin our work as early as we should like. Every four years following the gubernatorial election we are in more serious difficulties because it cannot be expected that a Governor-elect will have either the time or the orientation to give us the immediate decision required. If we do not know before his inauguration the *Manual* will appear so late that it becomes something of an anachronism rather than a useful guide to present government.

Finally, since the office of Secretary of State is not an elective one in Maryland, there are many changes of personality and consequent variation in understanding of the purposes of the *Manual*. During Governor McKeldin's administration there were three Secretaries of State; during Governor Lane's single term there were also three; during Governor O'Connor's administration there were six. The task of editing the *Manual* is an extremely difficult one; it seems especially unhappy, therefore, to add unnecessary administrative problems.

Senate Bill No. 88 was supported by the Hall of Records Commission. It was introduced in the Senate by the Majority and Minority Leaders among others and passed in that house without difficulty. It also passed two readings in the House of Delegates but failed of passage on third reading. On the instructions of the Hall of Records Commission the Archivist will attempt to have similar legislation passed in the 1959 session.