

to the incoming trial magistrate. In the future, such dockets and papers will be retained by the clerk of the court over which he presided.

The same legislation also authorized the destruction of motor vehicle dockets after five years, whether in the custody of the Circuit Court Clerks or the clerks of the lower courts. Authority to destroy civil and criminal dockets after a period of twenty-four years, however, was deleted from the bill. Unfortunately, permission to destroy the papers, granted by previous legislation, was also eliminated during the amending process. Since the law was enacted the day before adjournment, it was decided to accept the amendment and to seek remedial legislation at the next session of the General Assembly.

While the legislation of 1965 will provide some relief from the crowded conditions in the offices of many Clerks, space for both staff and records is still at a premium in most courthouses. Because of the rapid growth in population and the increasing demand of the public for improved service, space is a problem even in those counties where substantial additions to the courthouses were built only five or six years ago. Since the county must provide room in the courthouse for the offices of the Clerk of Court and the Register of Wills, while the State must authorize the use of fees collected by these officials for the purchase of record equipment and furniture, cooperation between the county and the State is essential. As advisers to the State Comptroller, our primary responsibility is to assist the Clerk or Register in the layout of record areas and in the purchase of appropriate equipment. Occasionally, however, the county also seeks our advice on air-conditioning and vault construction. During the year we assisted the Clerks in Caroline, Charles and Cecil Counties, and the Registers of Wills in Caroline and St. Mary's in planning for new office and record space.

The ever-increasing need for space and the rising costs of construction have caused many county and State officials to realize that the space problem cannot be solved by brick and mortar alone, but that its solution lies in the re-design of current records systems. We have long urged the Clerks to adopt a microfilm system of recording and were instrumental in getting legislation in 1962 permitting them to employ such systems. Although the Clerk of the Superior Court of Baltimore City and the Clerk in Prince George's County are recording the Financing Statements on microfilm only, most Clerks are reluctant to adopt such a system for other record series. However, plans for a microfilm recording program for the land records in Prince George's