

"The obvious purpose of the Bill was to give incentive to members of the respective forces to make a career of their service by holding out to them the prospect of promotion to the highest grades. I have much sympathy for this viewpoint because, in fact, in selecting the Police Commissioner of Baltimore City, I appointed the outstanding member of the Force who had come up through the ranks and had familiarized himself with all phases of police work.

"However, I do not think it is good policy to have a mandatory provision in the law prohibiting the appointment of any individual outside of the Department if he is the best qualified person available. More especially, I think to deny war veterans the opportunity of being considered for appointment to positions is contrary to our announced policy which is to give preferential treatment to members of the Armed Forces now risking their lives for us."

For reasons above assigned, I, therefore, return this Bill without approval.

DIVORCE.

SENATE BILL 294.

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Section 40 of Article 16 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, (1943 Supplement), title "Chancery", sub-title "Divorce", providing that a divorce a vinculo matrimonii may be obtained by reason of the voluntary separation of the parties for three consecutive years.

This legislative enactment would have reduced from five to three years the period in which divorces could be granted upon voluntary separation. The House of Delegates had previously voted to disapprove the bill but subsequently reconsidered and passed the measure by a close vote.

I am of the opinion that such a drastic change, if made, should be based upon a thorough study of the divorce question in this State in which the opinions of the Chancellors and Masters in Equity might be sought. Other well-informed sources might, also, be solicited in order to ascertain whether public sentiment would be in favor of such a change.

It appearing that no such general inquiry or investigation having been made prior to the introduction of this bill, I feel constrained to exercise my veto.