

ernor, Horatio Sharpe, and his Council, sitting as the Upper House of the Assembly. The laws against Catholics which were in force before this period and which remained with slight changes until the Revolution, were to have far-reaching effect, for as men's minds later became directed to more pressing matters, and interest in religious dissension receded into the background, the Catholics, who remained disqualified from holding any public office, were found almost to a man on the Revolutionary side. Charles Carroll of Carrollton is said to have declared that his political disabilities were an important factor in determining his attitude in the struggle.

To have an intelligent conception of the struggles between the Lower House and the government of the Lord Proprietary as represented by his Governor and Council sitting as the Upper House, the student must ever remember that at this time three subjects filled the minds of all: the fear of French and Indian invasion, the means by which taxes should be raised to prosecute the war, and the Roman Catholic question.

The prosecution of the war was the subject of endless discussion and dispute in the Assembly. The colonies felt that the threat to British authority in North America by the French was one which should be met in great part by the armies of Great Britain, with such voluntary help as each colony was disposed to give when its own territory was threatened. There was no widespread conception of a community of interest between the colonies as a whole. The idea of a confederacy or union such as had been formulated in 1754, the year before our period begins, at the Albany Conference under the crafty hand of Benjamin Franklin, was specifically repudiated in Maryland by a resolution of the Lower House passed at the February-March session. In an address to the Governor under date of March 10, 1755, the Lower House declared that "we cannot, consistent with our Duty to our Constituents, forbear to observe in general, that the carrying the said Plan into Execution would absolutely subvert that happy Form of Government which we have a Right to by our Charter, (the Freedom of which was doubtless one great Inducement to our Ancestors to leave their Friends and native Country, and venture their Lives and Fortunes among a Fierce and Savage People, in a rough, uncultivated World), and destroy the Rights, Liberties, and Properties of his Majesty's loyal Subjects of this Province" (pages 71-2).

The Lower House was perfectly willing to allow enlistment of Marylanders in the royal regiments for the general defence in the service of the King, if the King were willing to pay and maintain them, but it was unwilling to recruit and support a militia force except for defensive purposes, and this only on the basis of short enlistments.