

INTRODUCTION.

The bitter struggle between the popular or county party of the Lower House and the Proprietary and conservative interests as represented by the Governor and the Upper House, which has been narrated in former volumes of these *Archives*, reached a high water mark in the four sessions here recorded. In control of the purse strings of the Province, the Lower House at a time when money was desperately needed to provide men and supplies to prosecute the war, used this weapon in an attempt to extort political concessions from the Lord Proprietary, even to the extent of jeopardizing the defence of its own frontiers.

This introduction will first summarize the proceedings of the four sessions covered by this volume, and will then discuss in more detail under various headings the sundry controversial questions of political, legislative, legal, administrative, and military importance, which are brought out by a study of these Assembly records.

SESSION OF APRIL-MAY 1757.

This volume opens with the proceedings of the General Assembly which met from April 8 to May 9, 1757, in Baltimore Town, then a village of perhaps thirty houses. This was the sixth and last session of the Assembly which had been elected in November-December, 1754, and the meeting was held in Baltimore instead of Annapolis because of the smallpox epidemic then raging in the latter place. The meeting of the Lower House was held on the first day at the house of Thomas Sligh (p. 44), but on the following day it met at the home of the Rev. Thomas Chase, the rector of St. Paul's Parish, who was engaged to read prayers twice daily (p. 46). The record does not disclose where its subsequent meetings were held, but this was doubtless at the Chase rectory. This session was characterized by the same acrimonious disputes between the Governor and the Upper House on one hand, and the Lower House on the other, as had occurred in the immediately preceding sessions of this same Assembly. The Lower House organized by choosing Col. Henry Hooper of Dorchester County as Speaker in the place of Alexander Williamson of Kent, who was too ill to attend (p. 51). The Upper House met at the home of "Mr. Buchanan", probably William Buchanan who kept an inn near the northeast corner of Market and Calvert streets (pp. 41, 108).

Governor Sharpe in his opening speech to both houses on April 8 laid before them the minutes of a meeting which had opened in Philadelphia on March 15, between the Earl of Loudoun, the commander-in-chief of the King's forces in America, and the governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina. At this meeting these four colonies and South Carolina were asked to furnish at their own expense 3,800 provincial troops, of which Maryland's quota was to be 500 men, these colonials to be joined to 1,200 of the King's regular troops. Two thousand of these provincial troops were to