

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

Baltimore, October 1, 1938.

To the Maryland Historical Society,

GENTLEMEN:

The Committee on Publications presents to the Maryland Historical Society this volume of the *Archives of Maryland* containing the Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland for the year 1757 and for part of the year 1758. This is Volume LV of the general series, and the twenty-fifth volume of the sub-series recording Assembly affairs. The proceedings of the two houses for the four sessions held during the year and a half covered by this volume become progressively more voluminous. This is not due to an increasing amount of legislation passed, which was small, but to the bitter disputes between the two houses on political and economic questions which had as their result the interchange of very numerous and lengthy addresses between Governor Sharpe and the Lower House, as well as between the two houses, and the records of the innumerable votes taken in the Lower House on disputed measures.

During the period covered by these Assembly proceedings—from October 1756 to May 1758—the fortunes of the war for the control of Canada and the Mississippi Valley oscillated between Great Britain and France with the swing in favor of the latter. Britain and her American colonies were still under the shadow of the crushing defeat which the French had administered to Braddock and the forces under him on the Monongahela in the summer of 1756. Shirley, who had succeeded Braddock as commander-in-chief, had in turn been replaced by the Earl of Loudoun, who arrived in New York, July 23, 1756. Among the first orders which he issued were two that had not tended to insure him a warm welcome. One was his announcement that no provincial general officer or field officer, however high his rank, was to have a rank higher than that of captain while serving with the regular British forces; the other order was that the British commanders in the several colonies might quarter soldiers on the inhabitants without the consent of the colonial assemblies. These very unpopular measures tended to increase the strain which was already developing between the people of the colonies and the home government. Added to these irritations there was in Maryland the already existing tension between the people and the Lord Proprietary as to the methods of taxation to be employed to prosecute the war, and the determination of the people to take advantage of the critical situation to gain a greater degree of self-government.