

By December 1773, then, most of the major disagreements between the two houses were out of the way. Perhaps the Proprietary had learned a little wisdom, for, of course, what the Upper House and the Governor did was what he bade them do. Governor Sharpe's inclination was to serve the interests of the Province, but Governor Eden, whose inclination was also kindly, was the brother-in-law of Lord Baltimore, and his confidant. He therefore could command the attention of the Proprietary when he favored some yielding to the wishes of the people.

NON-CONTROVERSIAL ACTS

These last Provincial assembly sessions did not devote all their time to squabbling with the Governor and the Upper House. Altogether, in these two sessions—two, because the first meeting here set forth passed no laws—sixty-one statutes were enacted. Many were private acts, passed upon petition and for the benefit of one person or of a small group. There are two sure tests of the privateness of acts. They were not printed in full in Green's session laws, and the beneficiaries had to pay fees to the Speaker and to the clerks of the two houses when they were passed. Local laws concerned and benefitted either a part of the Province or a part of the people in it. Like the private acts, they were passed as a result of petitions, and, also like them, they were referred in the Lower House, to the members from the county they concerned. They might be country poor laws, or school laws or market laws or road laws, or laws to erect a new church or a chapel of ease or to support an organist in a parish that had an organ. And there were non-controversial general laws. They were of interest to all the people, even though they might deal specifically with only one person. The usual law for the encouragement of Anne Catharine Green of the City of Annapolis Printer was one, another prevented infection from the ship *Chance*, then lying in Annapolis harbor with small pox aboard. The Act for the relief of insolvent debtors embodied the principle behind the often-passed laws for the relief of languishing prisoners, and so saved the time and the effort of the Assembly.

The petitions, on which the private laws and some of the local ones were based, were uniformly presented to the Upper House, and, almost as uniformly sent down by them to the Lower House. Once in a while the Upper House rejected a petition, but generally they let the Lower House do it. There were hundreds of petitions presented in these sessions, and many of them were granted, but not one is now known to have been preserved, and very often the only clue to the contents is the preamble to the law wherein the prayer was granted (pp. 197-197, for instance). Martha Roundell and her sisters asked and got permission to divide some land without the concurrence of her husband Samuel "now residing beyond Sea." Executors were allowed to sell part of the estate for the payment of the decedent's debts (pp. 195-197). Several acts permitted the enrollment of deeds technically defective or confirmed titles to land (365, 388-391). John Done, sheriff of Worcester County got an extension of the time within which he could sue for fees due him.

Some of the local laws were, if not controversial, distinctly important.