

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

WHAT THEN were these offices worth? We must compute their value, not in terms of revenue alone, but in terms too of their trouble, risk, and tenure. For an incumbent, preferring to diversify his interests, would not, if he could help it, expend all his time, or risk much of his estate, in any single field. Thus an office like the shrievalty, with a high income but held for a limited term and entailing trouble and risk, was less valuable than the county clerkships and naval and customs offices, which though less lucrative were practically tenable for life and could be executed by deputy.

The most profitable offices were the chief executive's place, normally worth well over £ 2000 a year; the Deputy Secretaryship, Commissaryship General, proprietary Agency, and Land Office, with incomes varying in the eighteenth century from £ 300 to £ 700 sterling; the shrievalties, often worth £ 300 a year; the provincial and county clerkships, the Treasurerships, the Naval Offices and Collectorships, earning from less than £ 100 up to £ 250 or £ 300 annually. Smaller incomes rewarded the Attorney General, Currency Commissioners, Surveyors and Examiner General, Rent Roll Keepers, and Surveyors and Comptrollers of Customs. The provincial Armourer, the Clerks of Indictments, Deputy Commissaries, and Deputy Surveyors had as a rule very limited revenues.

In point of trouble and attendance the Commissaryship General, the shrievalty, and the farmerships were least desirable, for each made great demands on the incumbent. The proprietary Agency entailed the keeping of elaborate accounts and a correspondence with all those officers, high and low, who administered Lord Baltimore's revenues. The Rent Roll Keeper, after 1733, had somewhat similar duties, while the Examiner General had to inspect and sign all certificates of survey. Attorney's offices, requiring the prosecution of offenders and certain kinds of debtors, prevented the incumbent's defending criminals. Deputy surveyorships, difficult and fatiguing offices, required careful training,