

In English speaking countries political controversy usually turns on some financial issue. Characteristic of Maryland finance were low internal taxes, high customs duties (which however attracted little notice), and high officers' fees. These last were notably higher in Maryland than in Pennsylvania or Virginia. For in Pennsylvania all fees were paid at once in money; and in Virginia, among a larger population, officers had more business and could afford to act for smaller sums.<sup>7</sup> Popular opposition turned then in Maryland against fees, revolving about two perennial questions: How high ought they to be? And who might regulate them?

Responsible persons usually agreed that officers' fees "ought not only to be sufficient to pay them for their Labor, But Large enough to Encourage Industry and Integrity in men of Ability to Administer the Affairs of Government. . . ." <sup>8</sup> Nor should fees be so far reduced as to "discourage men of good Learning Integrity and parts to accept of . . . the inferior offices . . . [or] lessen and debase the State and Dignity of the superior officers who . . . ought to be handsomely supported according to their Several Characters not only for the sake of their own meritt and Capacity but the Honour of the Government itself whereof they are the immediate ministers." <sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, agreement in principle did not prevent endless quarreling at the practical level over this or that actual table of fees. Baltimore wanted them kept high to preserve the value of his patronage and in consequence his power. His chief officers, sitting in the Upper House, wanted them kept high to preserve their private incomes. But the delegates sought to lower them, partly to save the people money and partly to reduce His Lordship's influence.

Baltimore's authority to regulate fees, confirmed by the best legal opinion, arose from his charter right to establish offices. The Lower House, however, argued that fees had the character of taxes and so could be regulated only by laws of Assembly.

Each party asserted its position by word and deed. The Governor in 1642 proclaimed a full table of fees which, at that early time, went unchallenged by the Lower House.<sup>10</sup> In the second

<sup>7</sup> Cf. report of conference on officers' fees, Sept. 10, 1745 (*Ibid.*, XLIV, 33).

<sup>8</sup> Lords Baltimore and Guilford to Assembly, read April 21, 1720 (*Ibid.*, XXXIII, 543).

<sup>9</sup> Upper House to Lower House, June 29, 1714 (*Ibid.*, XXIX, 372).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 162.