

PREFACE.

In this volume is completed the Journal of the Council of Safety, which it will be remembered was the permanent executive committee of the Convention, or provisional revolutionary government. The Convention met at stated times, or was called together by the Council on any emergency, while the Council carried out its measures, and administered all matters connected with the war, or growing out of it.

In August, 1776, a new Convention was elected, charged with the duty of framing a Bill of Rights and a Constitution for the State. Their task was accomplished in November. The Constitution provided for a House of Delegates consisting of four members from each of the nineteen counties, and two each from Annapolis and Baltimore, to be elected immediately by the people. There was also to be a Senate of fifteen members, nine from the Western, and six from the Eastern Shore, to be chosen by an electoral college, designated by popular vote.

The governor was to be elected annually by joint ballot of the two Houses, and was to be assisted by a Council of five members, chosen in the same manner.

The election for electors to the Senate was held on Nov. 25, 1776, and they performed their duties on Dec. 9. The Delegates were elected on Dec. 18, and the Assembly met in Annapolis on Feb. 10, 1777. On the 13th Thomas Johnson was chosen governor, and was inaugurated with imposing ceremonies on Mar. 21.

The State government being now complete, the Council of Safety dissolved itself by simple adjournment, and handed over its records and unfinished business to the Council of the State. The records of the State Council are therefore taken up in this volume, as they have never been published.

The most disquieting matter with which the Council had to deal, was the activity of the tories, especially during the gloomy winter of 1776-77. In Somerset and Worcester counties there was a strong tory feeling; and under leaders of some ability the loyalists became so bold that a dangerous outbreak seemed imminent. Gen. Smallwood and Col. Gist were sent down into those counties in February, 1777, to suppress disaffection and restore order; and Congress empowered Smallwood to call in the aid of the continental troops, should it be