

## PREFACE.

The sessions of 1707 and 1708 were distinguished by no unusual events, and harmony prevailed between the different branches of the Government.

Attendance on the Provincial Court being inconvenient to those who lived far from Annapolis, and especially to the people of the Eastern Shore, the Governor and Council recommended a system of itinerant judges to go on the Western and Eastern circuits, and hold assizes twice a year. To this plan the Lower House would not agree, so the Governor appointed four such judges by virtue of the royal prerogative, and the Queen confirmed the appointments.

As the people seemed slow in erecting towns and ports, for which such ample provision had been made in the Act of 1706, the Governor feared that that Act was "not sufficiently coercive," and again urged the Assembly to bestir themselves in the matter. At first sight it seems absurd to try to make ports by main force, unless one could also create the traffic to justify them; but there was a special reason in this case. Vessels had to be entered and cleared by the royal collectors, and thus the planters who could have landed and shipped their goods almost at their doors, were put to the trouble and risk of conveying them to or from Annapolis, St. Mary's, Oxford, or Chestertown. To remedy this, an Act was passed creating all the towns, rivers and landings in the several Bay counties, "members" of the ports of their districts.

The proceedings in the case of Richard Clarke, attainted for various heinous acts or designs, such as counterfeiting, piracy, and blowing up the port of Annapolis, show symptoms of a degree of alarm which at present seems rather excessive. But that business can be better studied in the Council Journals.

In the Session of Sept.—Oct. 1708, no Acts were passed, the Lower House having shown so froward a temper that the Governor cut short the session by dissolution.

On July 30, 1709, Gov. Seymour died, and by the terms of his commission the administration of his office was vested in the Council who chose Edward Lloyd as their President. Lloyd held this position until the arrival of Gov. Hart in 1714.