

intended or impowered to agree upon any Plan of a proposed Union of the several Colonies . . . of which one General Government may be formed in America". . . .

After the close of the French and Indian War Great Britain's oppression changed entirely the phase of colonial affairs. The Stamp Act was the first direct menace of the liberties of the colonies. Aside from mere economical considerations, Great Britain doubtless had strong motives for the passage of such an act,—a desire to revenge the tardiness of the colonies in the late war and to remind them of her supremacy over them; but it was soon seen that the ministers who had favored such measures had made a mistake and an undue assertion of authority. Union was now felt to be a necessity for the preservation of their liberties. All other dislikes and grievances were laid aside for the time; the provincials united for resistance, and Franklin was put on a defensive in London. The French and Indian War had been a general preparation, and the provinces, despite the backwardness of many of them, had at least learned the lesson that coöperation was necessary in all international struggles, and the only effective method of opposing dangers which threatened all alike.

Maryland had learned the lesson too, and manifested her willingness to unite with her sister colonies at this momentous period. The province had developed a spirit of aggression and resistance to Proprietary rule. We have seen how jealously the Assembly guarded the revenues of the province, and how they opposed all attempts of the Proprietary to infringe their taxing powers when once acquired. Similar attempts by Parliament to interfere with the "franchises" and "liberties" of the colonies finally led to their independence.