WHY PENNSYLVANIA NEVER BECAME A ROYAL
PROVINCE.

BY CULVER H. SMITH.

With the exception of two years, 1692 to 1694, when
the colony was placed under the English Crown for
military purposes, Pennsylvania, unlike most of the
other English colonies, remained a proprietary prov-
ince from the time it was granted to William Penn in
1681 till the revolt of the American colonies in 1776.

This is remarkable, in view of the fact that both the
English government and Penn himself made efforts
repeatedly to place the province under royal control.
In four different years, 1701, 1702, 1706 and 1715, at-
tempts were made by means of Parliament to destroy
the Colonial charters including that of Penn's; but each
attempt failed. Penn himself offered to sell his rights
of government to the Crown in 1703; a sale was agreed
upon in 1712, and one payment made; but the transfer
was never completed, and when Penn died in 1718 his
proprietary rights passed on to his heirs. Then at-
ttempts were made by the Pennsylvania Assembly to
have the Crown take the government out of the hands
of the heirs, but when the Revolution came Pennsyl-
vania was still under the proprietorship of the Penns.

The attempts to take away Penn's charter by act of
Parliament came during Penn's lifetime, and each at-
tempt was designed to sweep away all proprietary
charters, Penn's among the others. The failure of
these attempts was due to several factors, but the most
considerable one was the opposition of the various pro-
prieters themselves, many of whom had seats in Par-
liament and thus were in position to plead the privilege
of peers. To their opposition Penn, not without influence himself, added his own and saved his proprietorship. It must not be understood that Penn was always unwilling to give up some of his proprietary rights, but he was unwilling to part with them without securing, first, certain guarantees for the Quakers, and, second, monetary compensation for himself. It is with Penn’s failure voluntarily to divest himself of his government that this paper is chiefly concerned, for it is upon this that it purports to bring new light.

There were a number of causes that led Penn to offer his government for sale. The most immediate cause was his financial difficulty with the Fords. Philip Ford was Penn’s steward, business manager of his private estates. Over a period of several years Ford had manipulated his accounts in such a way as to make Penn hopelessly in debt to him. When Ford died in 1701, his widow—the probable cause of Ford’s unscrupulousness—presented Penn with a bill for immediate payment amounting to 14,000 pounds, about 10,000 pounds more than Penn thought he owed or was willing to pay. But, unfortunately, Penn had mortgaged his province of Pennsylvania to Ford as security for the debt, and now he was threatened with the loss of it unless settlement was made. James Logan, Penn’s provincial secretary, advised him to sell his government to the Queen for enough to pay off the debt.

Added to his financial difficulties were those connected with governing the province. Penn found it difficult to conform to the demands of the Board of Trade, to enforce proper observance in the colony of the Acts of Trade and Navigation, to allay suspicion that he was a friend of pirates. The province had been founded as a Quaker colony, but it did not long remain without the addition of other sects that accounted for much that was anything but brotherly love. Particularly troublesome was the Anglican element
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which brought discord into the Assembly and sowed seeds of discontent against Penn. The Quakers themselves were obnoxious to the home government, as well as to the neighboring provinces, because they would not fight, and that at a time when military effectiveness was an important consideration. Neither would they subscribe to oaths—a religious scruple they were accused of making a convenience when they chose to connive at the violation of the navigation laws.

All these things Penn had to explain to the Board of Trade, and sometimes the explanations were not satisfactory. He had to defend himself against periodic attempts to wrest the charters from the proprietors' hands. Under the efforts of the Board of Trade the proprietors of the Jerseys were in 1702 induced to surrender title to their government, and like efforts were directed toward the same ends in the Carolinas. Penn, now under fire by the home government, treated with indifference by his provincial government, and defrauded and threatened by the grasping Fords, decided to take Logan's advice and rid himself of the proprietorship upon which he claimed he had lost in twenty-five years no less than 64,000 pounds.

Hence, on May 11, 1703, Penn wrote to the Board of Trade: "Since I observe your bent is extremely strong to bring all proprietary governments more immediately under the control of the Crown, and the disadvantage they will be under on that account, I thought to let you know that upon a just regard for the security of me and the people in our civil rights... I shall upon a reasonable satisfaction resign to the Crown the Government thereof saving some few privileges that will not be thought I believe unreasonable." Whereupon the secretary to the board immediately replied asking Penn to state his terms in writing.

Penn gave his terms to the board on June 18, 1703.

1 Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1702–03, Sec. 677, 684.
He asked 30,000 pounds as a monetary consideration; he reserved the right for himself and heirs to nominate the governor; and he asked that all rights and powers, jurisdictions and privileges granted by his patent, including a clear right to the three Lower Counties, be confirmed to him and his posterity.²

The following July the board took these conditions under consideration and held them to be unreasonable. The objections were that Penn demanded larger powers from Her Majesty than he was willing to yield, that he asked too much money, and that his claim to the three Lower Counties could not be sustained by any good title. The board therefore pressed him to come to more moderate terms. Penn was left to take the next step. Early in 1705 he submitted new proposals to the board. In these he waived the right to nominate the governor, and expressed a willingness to be satisfied with his seignory and proprietary privileges provided that he and his successors should be “exempted from troublesome offices and public taxes.” But he specified that the inhabitants should have their entire liberty of conscience and continued as capable of holding offices, “the people called Quakers especially.”³ Other conditions, including the price, remained much the same as before. Not obtaining satisfaction, Penn early in March called upon the board to know what it was he was expected to surrender. “Unconditional surrender” was the answer, “reserving only to yourself the propriety of the soil and the quit-rents thereof.”⁴

Then Penn drew up a new draft of surrender which was presented to the board in May.⁵ It was not a radical modification of the terms that he had insisted on earlier, and such things as a guarantee of liberty of conscience to the Quakers and confirmation of the laws

³ Ibid., 1704-05, 786.
⁴ Ibid., 946.
⁵ Ibid., 1126, 1156.
of the colony were matters in which the board replied that it could not concur. Halted again in his negotiations, Penn laid some new conditions before the board urging it to proceed with the question of surrender; but that Tory body took no further action at this time, for it was preparing another general attack upon the charters which was to take form in the bill presented in Parliament for that purpose in 1706 to destroy the charters by legislation.

The bill of 1706 failed. For nearly a year afterwards negotiations for surrender were at a standstill. But Penn's financial difficulties with the Fords increased; so did his desire to sell. Hence on January 29, 1707, he called the attention of the board to the proposals lying before it. That body now took a more favorable attitude, probably because it felt that its efforts to get control of his province by act of Parliament were unavailing. On February 5, 1707, the board made a report to the Earl of Sunderland, secretary of state, in which it pointed out the advantages of royal control. It recognized the expense and the difficulties Penn had undergone in developing the province from a wilderness into a well-peopled colony for which the proprietor had not been adequately compensated by the returns that the province brought him, although an increase of trade had brought in a yearly additional revenue to her Majesty's customs. The Board of Trade felt that Penn deserved an equitable consideration of his expenses and services, but that his surrender "ought to be absolute and unconditional, including a renunciation of all right, claim and pretension" to the government of both Pennsylvania and Delaware. But the "quantum" was the difficult part of the bargain to settle, and for this purpose the aid of the treasury de-

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*Calendar State Papers, 1704-05, 604, 1278.*

*Ibid., 1706-08, 734.*

*Ibid., 745.*

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partment was invoked. An inspection of the Customs House record revealed that for the seven years ending December, 1705, the value of the imports from Pennsylvania averaged but 5,227 pounds a year. 9

The board had no intention of making a bad bargain; and Penn’s anxiety to sell must have made it fearful of consummating a trade for something that would prove unprofitable to the buyer. It, therefore, addressed a request to Penn desiring his “particular answer in writing to the following queries: (1) The expense he had borne on account of the settlement of Pennsylvania, etc. (2) The profits he had made thereon, computing the value of the property remaining to him. (3) How the said profits and charges had arisen. (4) What advantages the crown would receive from the colony by purchasing the Proprietary more than it already had, and how the same might arise. (5) What the annual cost of the government was. (6) What revenue was settled for the support thereof, the yearly value of such revenue, and for what time granted. (7) The terms of purchase, that is, the quantum demanded and the times of payment. (8) What privileges and immunities he had granted by charter or otherwise to the city of Philadelphia or other towns or corporations in the province of Pennsylvania.”10

Penn answered on July 2, 1707, two months later, confessing his surprise and irritation that the lords put him upon answering queries that had been so fully answered already. The first three he said were answered over four years before. He saw no reason why returns from the land should concern the board since it was his government and not his land, that he was selling. But in answer to the question of price he offered to take 20,000 pounds, 5,000 to be paid in Pennsylvania, and 15,000 in England. He added, that it was

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9 Calendar State Papers, 1706-08, 857.
10 Ibid., 914.
deplorable that after almost six years of attendance upon the board at great expense, "what has been done should be done over again, like a man that, being ready to enter his port, is blown back again to that he left."11

But the Board of Trade's attention was absorbed by other matters—matters such as the boundary dispute between Maryland and Pennsylvania, the examination of Pennsylvania laws, and the settlement of rates of coins in the plantations. And so Penn was forced to take the initiative again. He presented a new proposal of surrender to the board the latter part of July, 1710.12

Again the board presented several queries to him. The price was still an obstacle, and the board's report in 1711 was similar to that made in the representation of 1707.13 The question of compensation was now referred to the Lord Treasurer, the Earl of Oxford.

At last the matter was in sympathetic hands. The Earl of Oxford was a friend of Penn's, but not being a member of the Board of Trade, he had not been in a position to serve Penn hitherto. Now he, with the assistance of the Attorney-General, prepared a draft of surrender. It provided that Penn, his heirs and assigns, should yield all title to the government of Pennsylvania, but retain their right to the soil and the jurisdictions incident thereto provided in the charter. Nothing in the deed should be construed to abridge the laws or acts of the government passed prior to the consummation of the surrender and not disallowed by the crown.14

During the spring of 1712, before the negotiations were completed, Penn was taken sick. His recovery became doubtful and he made his will. In this he devised his government to the Earl of Oxford (who was

11 Calendar State Papers, 1706–08, 1026.
also Earl Mortimer), and Earl Powlett, to dispose of to the Queen or to any other person to the best advantage and profit they could. But Penn, recovered soon after this and resumed negotiations for surrender himself. On July 17, 1712, he had a conference with the Lord Treasurer in which the two agreed on terms. "His Lordship resolved to move her Majesty to accept of the said surrender and conveyance, and to allow Mr. Penn the sum of 12,000 pounds to be paid in four years time from the date of such surrender and conveyance, and that the produce of the Queen's part of two ships lately seized at Newcastle upon the De la Ware River, be applied and accepted as part of the said payment."

One thousand pounds were actually paid Penn, but before the conveyance was completed, he was seized with another fit of apoplexy which impaired his mental faculties to such an extent that he was rendered incapable of executing the agreement. Thus he remained till his death in 1718. With a thousand pounds of the Queen's money as concrete evidence that the crown meant to buy it, Penn found his Pennsylvania government still clinging to him like a malady as he hovered on the brink of death.

While Penn was in this condition, the Privy Council in Committee of the Whole, on March 20, 1714, recommended that because of his incapacity the agreement made with Penn be perfected by Act of Parliament. To the recommendation of the Privy Council, Mrs. Penn and Penn's creditors gave their sanction peti-

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16 Cal. Treasury Papers, p. 360.
18 In 1708, Penn compromised with the Fords by a payment of 7,600 pounds. Of this amount he borrowed 6,600 pounds for which he mortgaged his province as security. The creditors, or mortgagees, were eight London merchants, Henry Gouldney, Joshua Gee, Silvanus Grove, John Woods, Thomas Callowhill, Thomas Oade, Jeffery Pennell and Thomas Cuppage.
tioning the king for confirmation and execution of the agreement.\textsuperscript{19}

But the bill was never passed. In fact there is no evidence to show that it was even introduced. The question arises, why did it fail at this point? It has been claimed by writers on the subject that the failure of the bill was due to unsettled differences between the heirs and the mortgagees of the province, the latter opposing the bill. But this contention is not confirmed by the evidence. On the contrary, the mortgagees petitioned that the bill be passed, and Hannah Penn, principal among the heirs joined in the petition.\textsuperscript{20} The cause of failure is rather to be found in the political shake-up which came a few months after the above mentioned action of the Privy Council. The factors involved were, the fall from power of the Earl of Oxford, the death of Queen Anne, and the consequent change of ministry.

Penn had two powerful friends who were more or less sympathetic with his projects. One of these was that eminent Tory, Robert Harley, or Earl Mortimer, who was Lord Treasurer under Anne. He was one of the two earls to whom Penn in his will of 1712 had devised his government, and with whom actual terms of sale to the crown were agreed upon. The other was no less a personage than the Queen herself, with whom Penn had been a favorite.\textsuperscript{21} On July 27, 1714, the Earl of Oxford was dismissed from office, and a few days later, August 1, the Queen died.\textsuperscript{22}

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\textsuperscript{20} Cal. Treas. Papers, 1714–19, p. 41–42.
\textsuperscript{21} See Penn's Works, I, 110.
\textsuperscript{22} In a petition of Hannah Penn to the Lords Justices in 1720, she refers to the recommendation of the Privy Council to have bill perfected by act of Parliament, and adds: “but Her Majesty's Death Intervening, nothing was further done therein, and since His Majesty's accession to the throne, altho application has been made to have said contract finished in such manner as His Majesty should think fitt, no convenient time has yet offered to take the same into consideration.” \textit{(Penn Manuscripts, Boundaries, p. 17.)}
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Thus came a political upset. The Whigs were now in power and a patronizing foreign king was on the throne. Penn's friends were out of office. George I, was not endowed with the same sympathy for Penn and his interests that Anne had shown, and his ministry was not particularly concerned with anything which did not affect its political ambitions. Lord Halifax, successor to the Earl of Oxford as Lord Treasurer, lived less than a year after his appointment, and his death further postponed any efforts to get the agreement carried into effect. It had taken Penn nine years to reach an agreement with the crown to sell his government; it had taken two years more to bring consummation of that agreement in sight; but just when hope seemed brightest, political change swept away the friends who had promoted his project, and left him with his proprietary government still in his hands.

The following year, 1715, a weak attempt was made in Parliament to secure all the proprietary governments to the crown by legislation. The bill as offered would have brought the government of Pennsylvania under control of the crown without process of sale. The mortgagees of Penn had counted upon the proceeds of the sale to reimburse themselves for Penn's debt, hence they saw their danger and asked to be heard against the bill. They claimed that the rights and property of the proprietary and mortgagees would be infringed, and prayed for a clause to be inserted omitting Pennsylvania from the operation of the bill. But the bill was never passed.

When Penn made his will in 1712, he had, as before mentioned, devised his government to the Earl of Oxford and Earl Powlett and their heirs upon trust to dispose of to the crown. His lands and possessions

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23 Penn Mss., Letters of Penn Family to James Logan, p. 68.
in Pennsylvania he bequeathed to his wife and eleven others, including James Logan, in trust. These trustees were directed to sell enough land to pay his debts. Afterwards they were to grant to his eldest daughter, Laetitia, and to the children of his eldest son, William Jr., 10,000 acres apiece in Pennsylvania, the remainder to go to his own younger children by second wife, John, Thomas, Richard, Margaret, and Dennis, in such proportions as his widow should direct. All his personal estate together with the arrears of rent in Pennsylvania was bestowed upon his wife who was made also, the sole executrix. Thus by his will Penn had separated his government from his land, placing his government under one set of trustees and his land under another.

Upon the death of Penn the provisions of his will became the subject of much controversy due to the claim to the government of the eldest son, William. After several years of litigation the will was confirmed by decree of the Exchequer in 1727. In the same year Hannah Penn, who had through the agreement of the heirs directed proprietary affairs since her husband’s death, died. A few years later all claims to the government were given up by the elder branch of the family and they directed the earls who had held the government in trust to relinquish the government into the hands of the younger sons, John, Thomas and Richard. The mortgage on the province having been paid off by 1729 the younger branch of the Penn family was soon finally established in control of both the soil and the government of Pennsylvania.

II.

For many years after Penn’s death, the Board of Trade remained active in its effort against the colonial charters. But it was hampered in trying to effect any radical change unless it had the support of Parliament;
and the powerful Whig Parliament of this period showed little or no disposition to interfere with vested interests. In 1721, the Board of Trade in a detailed representation to the king on the state of the colonies, recommended in regard to Pennsylvania that the agreement with Penn to sell his government be completed by the payment of the remaining 11,000 pounds. It urged the unsatisfactory and tardy method of transmitting laws for royal approval as a strong reason why the "purchase and agreement should be made and completed." But the opposition evoked by this sweeping representation, particularly from the corporate colonies, was sufficient to ward off any further action.

After the decree of the Exchequer on the will in 1727, the Pennsylvania proprietors evinced no apparent disposition to part with their property. The quarter-century of peace following the Treaty of Utrecht had given the province a chance for orderly development, and the rents therefrom were becoming an important consideration. Hence time only served to lessen any desire to give up their inheritance. But the people in Pennsylvania never forgot that an agreement had once been made to place the government under the control of the crown. When dissatisfaction with the proprietors arose, they would talk about the blessings of royal government, or threaten to assist in bringing about that divine event with a petition to the crown. The forces aligned against the proprietary interests are difficult to designate, for they were not always the same groups at different times. For a while the Churchmen in the colony agitated for royal government because they wanted the Anglican Church estab-

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26 N. Y. Colonial Doc., V, 603-04.
27 It was at this time that Jeremiah Dummer submitted his notable "Defence of the New England Charters." (Kellogg, Amer. Col. Charters, 311-12.
28 Osgood, Amer. Colonies in 18th Cent., II, 535.
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lished. Later, under the non-Quaker Penns, it was the Quakers themselves who gave the proprietors trouble. There were also the Germans and the Scotch-Irish who contributed to the agitations or against them, according to the combination at the time.

From the assembly of the province came the only efforts which threatened proprietary government. And while quarrels between the assembly and the proprietors were almost incessant, yet only twice did such efforts come to a head, in 1756-57 and in 1764, when in both instances the assembly sent Benjamin Franklin to England to plead its cause against the proprietors. In 1756, after hostilities with the French had started, relations with the proprietors came to a crisis. The storm broke when in a bill passed by the assembly raising 100,000 pounds for carrying on the war provision was made that the proprietary estates should be taxed the same as others. Governor Denny refused his approval of the bill. A rancorous debate ensued lasting several months.\textsuperscript{29} The assembly claimed it could not raise the money without great hardship if the proprietary estates were exempted, while it was only fair to tax them, anyway.\textsuperscript{30} It warned Governor Denny not to let "arbitrary proprietary instructions be the sole rule of his conduct." The governor replied deploiring the personal abuse heaped upon him, but said that when he considered that "several worthy gentlemen" who had preceded him had been no better treated, he was convinced that the assembly was not so much displeased with the person governing, as impatient of being governed at all.\textsuperscript{31} The upshot of the controversy was that the assembly voted to send its speaker, Isaac Norris,

\textsuperscript{29} The controversy can be traced in \textit{Votes of Assembly}, IV, pgs. 77-164.
\textsuperscript{30} Thomas Penn wrote to James Logan that "the tax of 100,000 pounds to be paid in that province can no more be raised in a year than ten million here, and the method is worse than the sum." (\textit{Penn Mss., Letter Books}, Vol. V, June 21, 1757.)
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Votes of Assembly}, IV, 162-163.
and Benjamin Franklin to England with a statement of their grievances.\textsuperscript{32}

Franklin made the trip to England alone in 1757. For nearly a year he carried on negotiations with the proprietors. The chief grievances discussed were denial of the governor’s discretionary power in matters of local legislation and refusal of the proprietors to allow their estates to be taxed. The proprietors would not agree to taxation of their quit-rents, but to offset the charge of injustice and cruelty they ordered five-thousand pounds to be paid to the public treasury out of the arrears of their quit-rents. They signified their willingness to have the annual income of their estate enquired into, and if this sum fell short of their proportion, to contribute enough more to make up for their share. This did not mean that they were willing to have their estates taxed. Yet the assembly prepared a bill which provided for just such taxation. Governor Denny refused to accept it, and a deadlock ensued. Neither side would yield till General Amherst appealed to them on the ground of military exigency.\textsuperscript{33} He persuaded the governor to ignore his instructions with the promise that he would take care of the consequences. The Governor assented to the bill, but he forthwith lost his job. This was a victory for the assembly.

With the let-up of hostilities against the French, the dispute subsided; but with the breaking out of Indian war or insurrection in 1763 the taxation dispute was again taken up. Franklin had come to an agreement with the proprietors in 1760 by which they consented to taxation of their “located uncultivated lands, provided they were not assessed higher than the lowest rate at which any located uncultivated lands belonging to the inhabitants should be assessed.\textsuperscript{34} Furthermore,
the Privy Council had agreed not to disallow the supply bill of 1759, to which Denny had been forced to give his assent, provided this amendment and five others were made to the bill. The assembly ignored these agreements, and passed the supply bill of 1764 according to the old bill of 1759. Governor Penn refused to sign it, and under the stress of impending calamity the assembly was forced to yield to the governor. In doing so, the assembly told the governor that it was departing from "the ancient forms of parliamentary proceeding," and waiving very important rights which under a more equitable government would not have been necessary; such a government, they hoped, was not far distant when proprietary will and pleasure would come to an end.\(^\text{35}\) It then resolved that since "all hope of any degree of happiness under the proprietary government" was at an end, an address should be drawn and sent to the king.\(^\text{36}\) With this the assembly adjourned in order to consult its constituents upon the advisability of petitioning the king to take over the government either by fulfilling the contract made with Penn for the sale of government, or by any other method his Majesty saw fit.

After a heated political contest in which some of Pennsylvania’s ablest men took part an Assembly was elected in October, 1764, sufficiently anti-proprietary in sentiment to send Franklin to England to present to the king an address and petitions against proprietary government. Franklin presented the petitions to the king in council in November 1765.\(^\text{37}\)

Meantime, the proprietors, themselves, had received petitions against a change to royal government, including one from the city of Philadelphia, and one from the

\(^{35}\) *Pa. Col. Records*, IX, 188.

\(^{36}\) *Votes of the Assembly*, V, 337 f.

three lower counties.\textsuperscript{38} The Penns had conferred with influential parties and felt no alarm about the outcome.\textsuperscript{39} In this feeling they were amply justified, for the following year the petitions were considered by the King in Council, and postponed indefinitely. "So all their threats," wrote Thomas Penn, "vanish into smoke. I am told Mr. Franklin was much shocked when he was informed of it. I have also heard that not one of the Council were for referring it, as it would give such an attempt too much countenance and encourage faction, for they were sure our own fault was yielding too much to the assembly."\textsuperscript{40} The proprietors had won.

The petition of the assembly in 1764 was the first and the only definite organized attempt by that body to deprive the proprietors of their government. It failed ingloriously. Had the conditions in the province continued to exist such as had thus far fed the flames of jealousy between the assembly and proprietors, the struggle no doubt would have gone on until the assembly had achieved its object. Happily, for the proprie-

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Penn Mss., Letter Books}, VIII, Tho. Penn to Chew, Jan. 11, 1765; Tho. Penn to Hockley, Jan. 12, 1765. "These petitions will be very useful in the opposition to be made to it (the assembly's petition)."

\textsuperscript{39} Tho. Penn to Rev. W. Peters, Nov. 15, 1765: "I have sounded some respectable members of the Privy Council about them (the petitions) and think I may be very easy as to any consequences attending them. I shall endeavor to get them rejected without hearing." \textit{Letter Books}, VIII.

\textsuperscript{40} Tho. Penn wrote to John Penn, Nov. 30, 1765: "I have now the satisfaction to inform you that they (the petitions) have been considered by the King in Council and resolved not to be proper for further consideration, but by his Majesty's order postponed, \textit{sine die}, that is (to use my Lord President's expression) for ever and ever; this is the most easy way of rejecting, and which they make use of when any considerable body of people petition; so that you may be assured we shall not have any further trouble about them, not any of the Council thought them proper to be referred to a committee, as they prayed for a thing not in the King's power to grant, nor in the least in his will and not giving any good reasons for their request." \textit{Penn Mss. Letter Books}, VIII, Thomas Penn to John Penn, Nov. 30, 1765.
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tors, a bigger question now absorbed the attention of the assembly, a question in which it found itself on the same side as the proprietors. In their opposition to the Stamp Act the factions in the province found it to their advantage to court the favor of the proprietors, while the proprietors considered it a good opportunity to bury the hatchet. Local factional questions were now absorbed by the international question. For the hatred of the proprietors there was substituted the hatred of Parliament, and the quarrel with the proprietors was not revived before the Revolution.

Professor Shepherd says that in 1766 the ministry tried to persuade the proprietors to surrender their government, and hinted that ten times the money offered their father would be given them; but the Penns seemed to feel that the proposition was instigated by their hated enemy, Franklin, and, since the proprietors were not disposed to consider any offers, the matter was dropped. Thus ended all pre-Revolutionary attempts to make Pennsylvania a royal province.

After Penn's death there was little chance of effecting a change of government. Although the Board of Trade still desired it, yet the proprietors no longer were willing to part with a possession ever growing in value. Parliament was not sufficiently disposed to help the Board secure it by legislation, nor did the Privy Council show any determined disposition to interfere. The Quakers in the province became eager for

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41 Thomas Penn wrote John Penn, "I hope you will not be long stigmatized by the name of Quaker and Presbyterian faction, as you write me the people seem to have forgot former differences and are all united against the Stamp Act." Penn Mss., Letter Books, Feb. 26, 1766.

42 Thomas Penn wrote in regard to the repeal of the Stamp Act that he hoped the petition for a change of government would now be withdrawn and dropped since "we have all been so fully employed on an affair of much greater consequences, and on the same side, in which we have wholly succeeded, that I think there is a probability of burying the former contests and living in peace." Ibid., Thomas Penn to Smith, April 1, 1766.
change, but they were simply a contentious faction, not able to marshal all the people in a united front. Although the Quakers controlled the assembly through most of the period, yet the assembly but once was able to pass a resolution asking the king to take the province under his control. And when this time came, their professions of loyalty to the king were but as mockery because of the contradictions in their legislative record. Hence they enabled the proprietors to have the better of the argument, and to preserve their holding intact.

The most promising chance for a change came during Penn's life and by Penn's own efforts. But Penn was too unreasonable in his terms, dickering for an advantageous trade till illness struck him down. Then, after a respite in which he made his bargain to sell, he witnessed a political change which displaced his government friends and substituted those not interested in his schemes, nor in adding another province to the crown. Had William Penn been less idealistic—less faithful to "the people called Quakers"—we would have had a different story to write. "I am persuaded," wrote Hannah Penn to James Logan in 1715, "that had my husband minded his own and his family's interest as much as he did the country's, it (the surrender) would have been finished years ago; for the answer I receive from all the great men is that my husband might long since finished it, had he not insisted so much in gaining privileges for the people."