

## Governor John Blackwell

ON leaving his colony in 1684 William Penn did not appoint a governor to take his place, but vested executive power instead in the Provincial Council. Unfortunately, the results of this experiment proved far from satisfactory, and it was deemed best to try another arrangement. In 1687 a commission of five was appointed to exercise the governing powers in lieu of the Council. Foremost in this commission was Thomas Lloyd. No discernible improvement came out of the new arrangement, however, as the conduct of the colony's affairs continued to border on the chaotic. As if all this were not bad enough from Penn's point of view, no efficient method had yet been hit upon to collect his revenues.

Pondering his unhappy situation during the summer of 1688, a solution seemed to present itself to Penn in a visit by Mrs. John Blackwell, whose husband, Captain Blackwell, was then in New England. Penn knew Blackwell as a man of ability and character, one who might make a suitable governor for his troubled province. A man of authoritative personality was needed who could quell the petty bickering of the Pennsylvania leaders and put the proprietary revenue on a profitable basis. Blackwell's experience seemed to suit him for the dual task.

A devout Puritan, Blackwell had commanded the "famous" Maiden Troop in the early days of the English Civil War, and had later risen to some prominence as Treasurer at War and as one of the Receivers General for Assessments. Meanwhile, he had developed large land holdings in Ireland. After the Restoration, Blackwell appears to have lived in Dublin for some years, returning to England about 1671, as a widower with seven children "and no great estate," to marry a daughter of General John Lambert, once one of Cromwell's chief officers.<sup>1</sup>

Late in 1684, "a gentleman of much piety and worth," Captain Blackwell in the company of his wife and daughter sailed for Boston,

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series* (Boston, 1900), XIII, 21.

where it is believed he had relatives. The leaders of the Bible Commonwealth received him cordially, and Blackwell decided to remain in the colony, although his wife soon returned to England. Before long he was involved in a number of the principal enterprises of the day.

On behalf of himself and several others, he petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts for a grant of land, and received a tract eight miles square to be erected into a township. In the approved manner Blackwell thus established himself as a landed proprietor and speculator, subject to his "setling in the said place at least thirty families and an able orthodox minister within three years next coming."<sup>2</sup>

When he was appointed a justice of the peace in the following year, 1686, Edward Randolph, who represented the interests of the Crown, was dismayed: "The Independent faction still prevails. . . . They have put Capt. Blackwell, Oliver [Cromwell's] Treasurer in London, son in law to Lambert, excepted in ye act of Indemnity, & a violent commonwealth's man to be of ye Commission of ye peace & a man consulted with in all public affairs."<sup>3</sup>

However, politics and land development did not consume his entire energies—the economic condition of the country claimed his attention. Blackwell noted with what difficulty trade and commerce were carried on for lack of a circulating medium, since there was very little coin to be had. To relieve the situation he proposed the establishment of a "Bank of Credit" which would issue paper money on sound security. The idea was approved by the General Court in September, 1686, as it considered "the said proposall as a publique and usefull invention for this Country." Unfortunately, the bank came to nothing and the scheme was dropped two years later.<sup>4</sup>

It was immediately following this disappointment that Blackwell received from Penn a commission appointing him Governor of Pennsylvania. As inducements to persuade the old Puritan to accept the office, Penn offered a salary of £200 to be collected from the Proprietor's rents, and further promised to use his influence in per-

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>4</sup> See sketch of Blackwell in Joseph Dorfman, *The Economic Mind in American Civilization* (New York, 1946), I, 96-111.

suading the inhabitants to grant an additional £100. He was also to have the use of Penn's house in Philadelphia.<sup>5</sup>

Penn described the characters of the leading men in the province, and recommended particularly that Blackwell take the advice of Thomas Lloyd, then President of the Council. He was "to inspect the animosities, to use some expedient; and if no way else, authoritatively to end them, at least suppress them," and he was to collect the Proprietor's revenue. As the role played by the Assembly seemed to be increasing in importance over its intended functions, Penn instructed Blackwell that its sole purpose was to approve or disapprove laws submitted to it by the Council. Its only power, in brief, was to say "aye" or "nay."<sup>6</sup>

Penn also wrote his Commissioners in Philadelphia, notifying them of the appointment of one who was "not a Friend, but a grave, sober, wise man to be Gover in my absence . . . let him see wh[at] he can doe a while." The new Governor, an expert in regulating financial matters, so Penn informed the old executive body, had his orders to "bear down with a visible authority vice & faction," but, Penn went on to add, "if he do not please you, he shall be layd aside."<sup>7</sup>

These instructions offer an interesting side light on the Proprietor's character. While exhorting Blackwell to be a disciplinarian, he temporized by practically placing the power of his removal in the hands of those soon to be affected by the new policies. Sternly committing him to unpopular measures—the collection of revenue, suppression of quarrels, and limitation of the Assembly's powers—he naively cut the ground from under him at the very start.

Meanwhile, what of Captain Blackwell to whom the governorship of Pennsylvania had come as a complete surprise? After seeking guidance in prayer and in the advice of his friends, he decided to accept the position. To Thomas Lloyd he addressed a friendly, gracious letter, notifying him that he would soon leave for New York where he requested some person be sent to guide him across the Jersies. After borrowing money to fit out his entourage in a seemly fashion and having paid his final respects to Sir Edmund

<sup>5</sup> Blackwell to Penn, May 15, 1690. All manuscripts quoted are from the collections of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>6</sup> Blackwell to Penn, Jan. 11, 1690.

<sup>7</sup> Penn to [the Commissioners], Sept. 11, 1688.

Andros, royal governor of the Dominion of New England, Blackwell departed for New York.<sup>8</sup>

There he met with the first of his many disappointments—Lloyd had not sent him a guide. After waiting hopefully but in vain for several days, Blackwell set off on his own and managed successfully to cross the Jerseys and arrived at Pennsbury, Penn's Delaware River manor house, on December 15, 1688. Courteously entertained by the Proprietor's gardener, he remained at Pennsbury over the week end.

On Sunday morning he had a conversation with Charles Pickering who was on his way to Philadelphia. Pickering, whose exploits form an engaging chapter in Pennsylvania's early history, promised to notify the authorities of Blackwell's arrival, and to meet him on the road with some friends the following day to escort him into town.

Accompanied by Arthur Cook and Joseph Growdon, two prominent colonists whom he met on the way, Blackwell began the final leg of his journey on Monday, December 17. When his party had come within a few miles of Philadelphia, Pickering passed by, unaccompanied by any friends and without a word to account for the absence of a reception committee. Not unnaturally, Blackwell suspected that something was amiss, for he had fully expected the officers of the government would come out to welcome him. Humiliated by their neglect, he made his way to William Penn's house, where the Provincial Council normally held its meetings, but there he met with another check. Its occupant, William Markham, Penn's kinsman and Secretary of the Council, was not at home, nor could it be learned where he was. In this uncertainty, with his horses and servants standing in the road, the Governor's plight was made all the more annoying by a large number of laughing boys who soon gathered, seemingly to enjoy his discomfiture.

Blackwell's demands for the key to the Council Room were at length successful, and he sought refuge there even though it was in a state of extreme disorder, full of dust, with papers scattered about,

<sup>8</sup> Blackwell to Thomas Lloyd, Boston, Nov. 11, 1688, *Pennsylvania Archives, First Series* (Philadelphia, 1852), I, 106-107. Blackwell to Penn, Nov. 20, 1688, No. 272 in Puttick and Simpson's Catalogue of Sale of Feb. 29, 1872. See volume of transcripts marked "Blackwell Papers," collected by Brinton Cox.

some on the table and others on the floor. While ruefully considering his perplexities, he was somewhat relieved by Arthur Cook who kindly volunteered to seek out the President, Secretary, and Councilors and to bring them to him.

Blackwell, resolved to publish his commission and take office that day, wearily sat down to await their coming. After some delay Markham appeared, apparently embarrassed and readily admitting that he had received the Governor's note regarding his arrival. He attempted to excuse his behavior by saying that he was a servant to many and could act only at their direction, but that he would go and find Lloyd and the others. At long last he returned with the President and some members of the Council.

From the outset it was obvious that Lloyd bitterly resented Blackwell, his successor in power. He made no pretense at welcoming the newcomer, but stood silently by. Disregarding Penn's injunction that the Governor be kindly received, Lloyd struck a note of defiance and disregard which was to characterize all of his relations with Blackwell and to wreck the Puritan's administration. It was in this inauspicious and strained atmosphere that Blackwell acquainted the Councilors with his commission and expressed his disappointment that they had not been ready to receive him.

Lloyd's quibbling reply to the reproach was typical of his pettifogging attitude. The officers of the government should have been more formally summoned, he complained. Blackwell's arrival was a surprise, and until they examined his commission they did not think themselves obliged to meet with him, nor was he Governor until they had laid down their own commission.

At this, Blackwell handed his commission to Lloyd and asked him to read it, but Lloyd had no will to co-operate, remarking that it was not valid until it bore the Great Seal, of which he was the custodian. An exasperated argument ensued between the two, which ended with Lloyd's request for time to consult with the Council. Blackwell obligingly withdrew from the room to permit a private conference which, after due deliberation, decided to publish the Governor's commission the following day. Lloyd then made some effort to soothe Blackwell's feelings, but the latter remained dissatisfied and was later to discover that it had been Lloyd himself who had prevented the others from meeting him on his arrival.

The next day in the Council Room Blackwell was formally accepted as Governor, a ceremony which was followed by a dinner in his honor given by Thomas Lloyd. This marks the only gesture of amenity offered by Lloyd during Blackwell's administration. Perhaps it was true, as some said, that Lloyd was offended at being displaced and was jealous of his successor. Others felt that he little expected to be eclipsed by an imported governor. At all events, his policy from this point forward was to be one of harassment, delay, and enmity. It is not unlikely that Blackwell after the bizarre events of his first day in Philadelphia already saw the handwriting on the wall as he took up lodgings with Griffith Jones. He was disappointed in the expectation of living in William Penn's house, for not only was William Markham in residence there, but the house was crowded with a large quantity of goods from Pennsbury.

In taking up his duties, it was essential that Blackwell should first secure copies of the instructions sent by Penn from time to time to his Commissioners and by which the Governor also was to be guided. Upon request, but after much delay, some of these were turned over to him by Lloyd, but others were withheld. Lloyd simply stated that these others were tied up with private matters and the Governor could not see them.

In this impasse Blackwell deemed it necessary to seek the advice of his Council, but here he ran into more trouble, for he was unable to procure their attendance until nearly a month after his arrival. Difficulties in securing a quorum he blamed on Lloyd, whom he suspected of encouraging the Councilors to stay away.

One of the Governor's first official acts was the appointment of new justices of the peace for Philadelphia County. In agreement with his Council, he selected their names and drafted their commissions which he sent to Lloyd, the Keeper of the Great Seal, to pass under that instrument. But nothing happened. When Blackwell called on Lloyd to find out the reason, he was entertained by the Keeper "with an harangue of severall things, out of some law book, touching the formes of Commissions." Lloyd objected to Blackwell's provision which empowered justices to collect fines and escheats. In refusing to set the Great Seal to the commissions, Lloyd maintained that the Governor did not have power to direct the use of the Seal, that it was in his sole authority as Keeper, a post which he held directly from

Penn. His obstructionist tactics were thus based on an assumed power which gave him a practical veto over every important action taken by the chief executive of the province.

Stung by Lloyd's actions as Keeper of the Seal and Master of the Rolls, Blackwell complained that there was no necessity for such offices and that there was too much deference paid to the importance of the forms of government rather than to the necessities of the situation: "tis an old saying in London, that the city is not so much governd by the wisdom of the Mayor, as the capparisons of his horse."

Another situation which worried Blackwell at this time was the nonenforcement of the Navigation Acts which he believed required that all Pennsylvania exports be shipped to England, a procedure not followed by Philadelphia merchants. The chief of these, Samuel Carpenter, a member of the Council, attempted to justify the common practice, but Blackwell was not convinced, and it was finally decided to refer the matter to the Proprietor.<sup>9</sup>

Actually, Blackwell was not in sympathy with the Pennsylvania traders, for he felt they oppressed the poorer people by selling imported commodities at excessive rates and by allowing English coin to pass at one fourth advance in value in order to keep it in the province. He estimated that goods which were worth £100 in England retailed at over £400 in Pennsylvania. Trenchantly, Blackwell observed of his Quaker charges that "each prays for his neighbor on First Days and then preys upon him the other six."<sup>10</sup>

Whatever the Governor did seemed ultimately to bring him into conflict with Thomas Lloyd. Lloyd, it appeared, had planned a trip to New York. When word of this reached the Council, it was unanimously resolved, on February 1, 1689, that he should deposit the Great Seal with them during his absence. The effect of this action was to bring Lloyd to their next meeting, at which time he read his answer. In a wordy and aggrieved statement which stirred up as much dust as possible, he refused to make any specific reply until the resolves of the Council were struck out of the Council book. His paper bristled with secret meaning: "I wish for the ffuture, that no

<sup>9</sup> Blackwell to Penn, Jan. 25, 1689.

<sup>10</sup> As quoted by Arthur Pound, *The Penns of Pennsylvania and England* (New York, 1932), 217. See also *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXIX (1945), 233-237.

Sinister designe, passion, or male conduct may so Influence or hurry any of the Sincere minded of you as to act unbecoming ye wisdom and dignity of the place. You have dealt unkindly by me . . . to lay a foundation whereby to ground a misdemeanour against me upon a Conjectured non compliance with your Resolves. . . . Let such methods be covered with Silence or buried in Oblivion.”<sup>11</sup> Undoubtedly, Lloyd felt the weakness of the position he had assumed with respect to the Great Seal and was not anxious to let the Seal out of his possession. His reply, however, was considered by Blackwell as a severe reflection on the Council and one couched in libelous terms.

Two parties soon evolved, one which supported the Governor and included William Markham, Griffith Jones, and Patrick Robinson, and a far larger party which looked to Lloyd for leadership. In this latter party was Samuel Richardson, whose conduct toward Blackwell in meetings of the Council became more and more offensive. Richardson maintained with great heat that Blackwell was not Governor because Penn had no authority to appoint a governor. In despair Blackwell appealed to the Council which declared itself offended by Richardson who then withdrew, “declaring he Cared not whether ever he sat there more againe, etc.”<sup>12</sup>

After Richardson’s withdrawal the Governor and his Councilors found it necessary to examine certain records in the custody of the Clerk of the Provincial Court, David Lloyd, who also served as clerk for the Master of the Rolls, Thomas Lloyd. David Lloyd appeared before the Governor, but refused to submit the required records, declaring, “you may command the Judges, and ye Judges might Order him, & other slight and Scornfull Expressions he used.”<sup>13</sup>

The Clerk was ordered to withdraw, as the Council considered his conduct a high contempt, declaring him unfit for his office. Blackwell had by this time been but two months Governor, but already the paralyzing effect of Thomas Lloyd’s enmity had seriously disturbed the government of Pennsylvania. On February 28, 1689, Lloyd refused to put the Great Seal to the commissions for five provincial judges, apprehending that the commission itself “seems to be more moulded by ffancy, then fformed by law.”<sup>14</sup> This despite the fact

<sup>11</sup> Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, *Colonial Records* (Harrisburg, 1838), I, 235–237; hereafter cited as *Colonial Records*.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.



that the Council had approved the instrument. By this time some of that body had come to feel that the Keeper's refusal to do his duty was a misbehavior in his office. Griffith Jones averred that the Keeper had made himself the ruler and had usurped the power of the Governor and Council. Opinions such as these led the Council to vote that Lloyd had highly misdemeaned himself. It is not difficult to imagine the reaction of its members when they soon after received word that David Lloyd had refused to surrender the records of the court to the new clerk because Thomas Lloyd had ordered him not to. As Robert Turner, an influential Councilman, truly said, "we have two Goverrs & two Councils: One within and another Without."<sup>15</sup>

In view of Lloyd's contempt as Keeper, Blackwell refused to admit him to the Council when he presented himself as a newly elected member representing Bucks County. Instead he decided to charge him with high misdemeanors and appointed a committee to prepare the prosecution. Another new Councilor, John Eckley of Philadelphia County, was also refused a seat by the Governor and a majority of the Council, because a large number of Welshmen from Chester County had irregularly voted in Eckley's election.<sup>16</sup> The exclusion of Lloyd, Richardson, and Eckley brought on many debates, for they had strong supporters. On one occasion the Secretary recorded, "Many intemperate Speeches and passages happend, ffit to be had in oblivion."<sup>17</sup>

On April 5 the Council meeting was disturbed by Thomas Lloyd's arrival. Lloyd insisted on his right to attend the meeting and refused to depart. To get rid of him Blackwell was forced to adjourn the session to his own lodgings. Lloyd remained in the Council Room arguing with the other members for some time, using "sharpe & unsavoury Expressions" and alarming the Secretary by the violence of the quarreling which he produced.<sup>18</sup> The Governor had to return to quell the disturbance and to bring the Councilors to his own house, where they began preparing bills to be acted on by the Assembly in the coming month.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>16</sup> Sixty Welshmen from Haverford and Radnor Townships, recently separated from Philadelphia Co. and placed in Chester Co., insisted upon voting with the inhabitants of Philadelphia. Blackwell had been instrumental in breaking up the Welsh Barony.

<sup>17</sup> *Colonial Records*, I, 271.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

For its legislative sessions the Council required a quorum of twelve out of its eighteen members, instead of six which sufficed for its ordinary meetings. The larger number of Councilors, however, only made its gatherings more confused. Instead of drafting laws, they fell to ceaseless bickering, largely on the issue of the exclusion of Lloyd, Richardson, and Eckley. Before long all realized that matters had reached such a state of ill will that no business could be accomplished, and the Governor adjourned the legislative sessions.

One episode which occurred prior to adjournment and which added to the bitter feelings was the printing of the Frame of Government. This was effected by Joseph Growdon, apparently through the connivance of Thomas Lloyd who, as Master of the Rolls, was the custodian of the original document. Although Growdon churlishly told the Governor that he did not know who had printed it, everyone knew it was the work of William Bradford, the only printer in Pennsylvania.

Blackwell was outraged at the publication for he considered it dangerous to print such matters at a time when the country was in a distracted state. Moreover, the Proprietor had declared himself against the use of the press. In the previous year Penn had cautioned his Commissioners, "Have a care of printing there, for it may cost me & ye Province Deare."<sup>19</sup>

Attended by several members of his Council the Governor interrogated Bradford, who refused to admit that he had printed the Charter, though defending his right to do so. Blackwell's threat to bind the printer in a large bond for security so that he would in the future print only what the Governor allowed may have played some part in the eventual departure of Bradford from the province.<sup>20</sup>

On the day that Blackwell adjourned the Council, April 9, six of its members—there being fifteen in good standing—wrote a complaining letter to William Penn: "We know not," they said, "that we have given any just occasion of offense, but having been the more cautious & circumspect finding that he hath rather watched us for evill and takes downe every word wee say in short hand whereby to insnare or over awe . . . us wch wee looke upon very hard." Accord-

<sup>19</sup> Penn to the Commissioners, Mar. 28, 1688.

<sup>20</sup> John William Wallace, *An Address Delivered at the Celebration by the New-York Historical Society, May 20, 1863, of the Two Hundredth Birth Day of Mr. William Bradford* (Albany, 1863), 49-52.

ing to them, Blackwell had insulted them by referring to them in the "most odious terms as factious, mutinous, seditious, turbulent and the like." They dwelt on the exclusion from the Council of Lloyd, Richardson, and Eckley, lamenting particularly Blackwell's treatment of Lloyd: "Thou can hardly believe how thy truest & surest friends are struck at."<sup>21</sup>

While the Councilors were writing the above, Blackwell was similarly employed in his own defense, informing the Proprietor of "the influence of an ambitious discontented person without doores." Blackwell found that "No person though ever so respectfull, if not under the dialect of a Friend, can have civill treatment." The action aimed at, he maintained, was to have Lloyd succeed him.<sup>22</sup>

The next event in the story of his administration was the convening on May 10 of the Assembly. This body lost no time in revealing the animosity with which it viewed the Governor. In his message to the Assembly, Blackwell commented on the fact that no bills had been prepared for it to pass into laws and noted that the Proprietor had given orders to let all the laws of Pennsylvania lapse, except the "Fundamentals," and that the Assembly should repass such of the acts thus canceled as it saw fit. None of the laws previously passed, Blackwell observed, had been properly attested by the Great Seal. However, he urged the expediency of permitting all laws enacted in Penn's time to remain on the books, provided they did not violate the laws of England.

In considering the Governor's message the Assembly disagreed with him concerning Penn's directive to cancel the laws. In their opinion this decision had been altered, and the Proprietor now desired that all the laws should stand and be considered in full force.

It is interesting to note that the Assembly was embarrassed by the lack of a quorum just at the moment when it was known by the absent members "that this House were going about to call the Violators of the Liberties of the Freemen of this Government to Account."<sup>23</sup> The willful absention of certain members at such a time suggests that the Governor was not without friends in that group.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel Carpenter and others to Penn, Apr. 9, 1689.

<sup>22</sup> Blackwell to Penn, Apr. 9, 1689.

<sup>23</sup> *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1752), 55. The Assembly was disturbed by the imprisonment of one of its members, John White.

That the Assembly failed to concur in William Penn's view that it was not a debating society was soon made clear. It bitterly censured three members of the Council for causing the arrest of one of their number and futilely ordered that a warrant be made out to bring them and the Sheriff of Philadelphia County "before this House to answer their contempt and Breach of Privilege aforesaid." They also resolved that the printing of the Charter of Liberties was beneficial to the public and warrantable by law. Further, they addressed a petition of grievances to Blackwell complaining about the exclusion of the three Councilmen. This petition struck at Blackwell's friends as "chief Authors of the present Arbitrariness in Government, and who are men unworthy, as we conceive, to be much consulted with, and unfit to be chief Magistrates."<sup>24</sup>

On this note the Assembly disbanded, having done little except quarrel. No action was taken on confirming the laws then in use, which, according to the charter, were due to lapse twenty days after the Assembly broke up. It was to save these acts that Blackwell and his Council gathered once more in discussion.

Their meetings were held at the Governor's lodgings despite the desire of several members to use the Council Room which Blackwell thought "to strayte & close for him this hott weather." The temper of his advisors may be seen when even this decision was made the cause of dissatisfaction, "Some intemperate Speeches past from some about it."<sup>25</sup>

Before they could make much progress with the laws, the Council was disturbed by the arrival of Lloyd, Richardson, and Eckley. Their insistence upon sitting with that body created such a scene that Blackwell adjourned the meeting and left the room. Most of the Councilors remained with Lloyd, however, and the confused noise and clamor which soon began to issue from the Governor's room caused people in the street to stop and listen. Blackwell was constrained to return, and "desired ye sayd Tho. Lloyd would forbear such Lowd talking."<sup>26</sup>

At the next meeting several of Lloyd's friends remained away and there was no quorum. Nevertheless, business was conducted, and through great effort all present, except Samuel Carpenter, signed the

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>25</sup> *Colonial Records*, I, 289.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

Governor's declaration that all the laws passed prior to Penn's departure for England should remain in force and that the Governor could issue commissions for judges under the lesser seal.

Lloyd lost little time in attacking this action, publishing on June 4 *A Seasonable Advertisement to the Freemen of this Prov; etc.* According to this exposition, when laws expired no declaration of the Governor could revive them, even though it be issued under the Great Seal and supported by a legislative quorum of the Council; much less could any declaration be considered valid when passed only under the lesser seal and signed by only nine instead of twelve Councilors.<sup>27</sup> Actually, however, Lloyd was just as anxious as Blackwell that the laws should remain in effect, but this must not be accomplished through any instrumentality of the Governor. He argued that the laws remained in force because the Assembly had not yet been dismissed, but continued in session although adjourned. This was a pretty nice point and typical of Lloyd.

On June 24 Blackwell wrote Penn, "I now only wayt for the hower of my deliverance: for I see tis impossible to serve you in this place." He complained of Lloyd "who thrusts his oare in every boat; and will condescend to be a solicitor in any faction rather than give out . . . a serpent of yr owne cherishing." Not only had Blackwell been unable to raise any of his pay, but he found Philadelphia twice as expensive a place to live in as London and the climate too hot for him; moreover, "the hosts of musquitos are worse than armed men; yet the men without arms worse than they."<sup>28</sup>

Council meetings were held but rarely during the latter half of 1689. Late in June Blackwell was alarmed by rumors of French and Indian invasions. The Councilors soothed his fears, however, and he accepted their advice. But military worries came to a head once more in October, when he received a letter from Whitehall, dated April 13, 1689, ordering preparations to be made for war with France. The views of the Council on this message were diverse. Luke Watson felt it to be the Governor's duty to establish a militia. Others urged delay; some, preparedness. John Simcock saw no danger except from bears and wolves. The Quaker view was stated by Samuel Carpenter: "I am not against those that will put themselves into defence, but it

<sup>27</sup> Document signed by Lloyd; dated June 4, 1689.

<sup>28</sup> Blackwell to Penn, June 24, 1689.

being contrary to the judgment of a great part of the people, & my own to, I cannot advise to the thing, nor Express my liking it." Opposition from Carpenter and Simcock prevented the Council from coming to any agreement as to what should be done.<sup>29</sup>

In December Blackwell received a long-awaited packet of letters from Penn. Their contents were not pleasing, however, as Penn reproached him for having fallen into the very pit of which he had been warned. "Do you meane," replied the harassed Governor, "that, if a man contemne or deny the king's authority given to you & derived unto me, and do it with great impudence, three several time & days one after another, that I should comend him." Using a simile which may have expressed his personal view of the difference between Puritan and Quaker philosophies, Blackwell continued, "I have read of a good old puritan's [saying] when a fire is kindled in a city, we do not say, coldly, Yondr is a great fire. Pray God it do us no harm."<sup>30</sup>

Somewhat untactfully Penn had commanded Blackwell to drop his prosecution of Lloyd and not to indulge in quarreling. Stung by this feeble word, Blackwell retorted, "Is impeaching a Grand Delinquent, & firebrand called Quarreling in a Governor?"<sup>31</sup> The only part of Penn's letters which really pleased the Governor was that which permitted him to give up his office. He did, however, agree to serve as Receiver General while the winter season made his departure from Philadelphia impossible.

On January 1, 1690, the Council convened for the last time at his request. Sitting with it were the Governor's old adversaries, Lloyd, Richardson, and Eckley. This time their presence went unchallenged. To a quorum of twelve members Blackwell made his farewell address and surrendered his commission. To them he gave a new instrument from Penn authorizing the Council to serve as the executive branch of the government and to choose a president to preside over it. The new commission was promptly accepted and Thomas Lloyd was elected to the place of honor.<sup>32</sup>

During the period of his administration Blackwell had made several unsuccessful efforts to collect the Proprietor's revenue in

<sup>29</sup> *Colonial Records*, I, 306.

<sup>30</sup> Blackwell to Penn, Jan. 13, 1690.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Colonial Records*, I, 317.

response to Penn's complaint that he had not received a penny since his departure from Pennsylvania. Although a number of sources were supposed to contribute to this purpose, the great fount of income lay in the quit rents, that form of feudal dues which encumbered most of the land sold by Penn. Now that he had been relieved of his executive functions, Blackwell energetically turned to the revenue problem in prosecution of his position as Receiver General. His enthusiasm for this pursuit was doubtless enhanced by the desire to raise enough money at least to make up the salary he had been promised.

As a first step in this direction he convened Penn's four Commissioners of Propriety, any three of whom were empowered to constitute themselves a court of exchequer for the collection of arrears in rent. If he had had any hopes in the assistance of this legal body they were soon dashed, as two of its members refused to serve, thereby dooming the powers of the court. Of the two who remained, Robert Turner proved fairly helpful, but William Markham, though promising much, accomplished little, and seems to have lost interest in Blackwell now that he was no longer Governor.

In order to systematize the collection of the quit rents it was necessary to prepare a rent roll, a task beset with difficulties. It required much drudgery to determine when purchases had been made and what rent had been agreed to. No one seemed anxious to help him obtain such information, but at last reasonably correct lists were arrived at. In general, all old purchasers owed quit rents from 1684, while the more recent ones were in arrears from their date of purchase. Unfortunately, no general account has been kept of such rents as had been paid during the past five years.

With his rent roll nearing completion, Blackwell prepared a form of summons and had six hundred copies printed by Bradford. This form, when filled in, showed how much the property owner was indebted to Penn and directed him to make his payment to the Receiver General on certain specified days. John McComb was employed to deliver them, and began his work on January 24 by calling on the householders in Front Street.

Complaints came thick and fast. Blackwell's commission, many insisted, should have been published, passed under the Great Seal, and enrolled. Although Thomas Lloyd subsequently refused to affix

the Seal to the document, he did consent to enroll it, and Blackwell had a copy of it published by posting it at the usual place, the bell tower in the market. But such formalities did little to alleviate popular anger, and McComb soon resigned his position. The reproaches of his friends had become too unpleasant, to say nothing of the vilification heaped on him by Thomas Lloyd.

A few persons did pay their quit rents, but most either ignored the summons or presented excuses. A few claimed Penn owed them money, others that they had paid Markham, several that they had never received their patents. Blackwell's demand that payment be made in hard coin prevented action by those willing to pay in grain or other country produce.

The lack of co-operation on the part of the government, and the resistive spirit of the people, combined with his inability to use the courts to back up his demands, soon convinced Blackwell that he could accomplish nothing for the Proprietor, and that it would be useless to remain any longer in Philadelphia. Deputizing Robert Turner as Receiver General on March 10, he departed for Boston, from where he was soon appealing to Penn for his salary.<sup>33</sup>

Blackwell's trials in Pennsylvania had been severe, and his administration may be considered a total failure. Under the circumstances, however, it is doubtful that any outsider could have done much better. Yet it may be suspected that the Governor, while unquestionably honest and able, tended to add fuel to the flames because of his somewhat uncompromising and militant personality. The qualities needed for his position were those of a master politician, and the aging Puritan soldier was scarcely that.

Many a successor to Governor John Blackwell was in his own time to experience kindred difficulties. Many a later Governor may well have echoed Blackwell's complaint: "I have to do with a people whom neither God nor man can prevayle with [for they] despise all Dominion & dignity that is not in themselves . . . Alas! Alas! Poore Governor of Pennsilvania!"<sup>34</sup>

*Philadelphia*

NICHOLAS B. WAINWRIGHT

<sup>33</sup> Blackwell's rent roll is in the Logan Collection; his account of his services as Receiver General may be found in the Penn Papers. Blackwell arrived in Boston, Mar. 27, 1690. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, First Series*, Boston, 1879, XVI, 107.

<sup>34</sup> Blackwell to Penn, Jan. 11, 1690.