

Captain John Rogers

Gazette of the United States.

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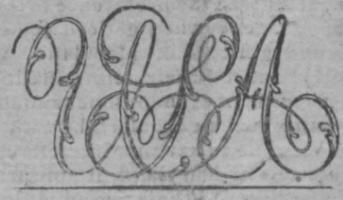
WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 1790.

[WHOLE No. 131.]

FOR THE GAZETTE OF THE UNITED STATES.

(Omitted in our last for want of room.)
 Extract of a letter from Massachusetts, June 30.
 "YOU will doubtless be informed, if you do not see the News Papers from this quarter, that the demon of discord is exceedingly busy at this time; the proceedings of our National Legislature, being faulted by many impatient persons, gives occasion to a few candidates for public notice, to traduce the general government in a way that indicates what sort of materials the scribes are composed of.—My reliance is on the firmness, disinterestedness and patriotism of a majority of Congress. When I was at New-York, similar remarks to those published in the papers, were often made by persons whom I found either unfriendly to the government, or destitute of a proper idea of a free constitution.—I remember particularly being one day in the gallery, a member rose at the close of a debate which had been continued through the whole forenoon, and made a speech of about 10 minutes length—I thought very much to the purpose; but a man who sat next me, appeared to be in a perfect agony of impatience—and expressed himself in such a manner as convinced me that if he could have had his will, the member would have been precluded from offering his sentiments on the subject.—I just observed, "that in a free assembly every member had a right to give his opinion; and if controuled as to the time, or mode of speaking, there was an end to all freedom of debate." I tell some of my uneasy friends that "patience must have its perfect work"—that however, there is one way of shortening the sessions of Congress, and preventing long speeches, which the people can adopt, and but one—and that is to change the government from a free republic to a despotism—but would this be an alteration for the better? The Legislature of the United States is composed of characters, selected from the people with as much coolness, and freedom from party influence, as any that will perhaps ever be chosen. According to all the observations that I have been able to make here, from the printed accounts, or from being an eye-witness, there is an evident solicitude to promote the general interest of the Union—but every man knows, who knows any thing, that it is in the power of one or two individuals in a free assembly, to protract and embarrass their proceedings—it is also to be considered that Congress have as it were but a "choice of difficulties"—and their situation is different perhaps from that of any Legislature that ever existed before. A session in the political history of America, even of a year, is but a point of time, and if the result of Congressional deliberations at this important period, should be a judicious system of finance, whatever may be the present sentiment, posterity will bestow a just tribute of applause on their decisions.

We regret very much that it is thought necessary to bring forward the subject of residence again—and some people talk very strangely; however, it begins to be considered that this and every other question can be introduced at the pleasure of one or two members, and much more so at the instance of a whole State; and therefore to say that such things shall not be, is to say, we will not submit to a free government. I wish the business was once fairly settled, that all contest on the subject may be at an end. I have often reflected on the observation of a gentleman who had had long experience of human nature, in public life—"the new Constitution," said he, appears to be agreeable in theory—the people are greatly elated at the prospect which presents itself to their imagination—but a Constitution is one thing, and the administration of it is another; those who will be elected into public office will have a trying time—and it will be well if the Constitution is not made to share the blame with the administration, of all the real or imaginary evils that weakness, credulity or wickedness may conjure up."—I observed in reply, that all that could be done was to wait the event—acknowledging at the same time—"that it was yet to be determined, whether any given number of the human race could be found, who possessed wisdom and self denial adequate to supporting a government of their OWN INSTITUTING."



CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.
TUESDAY, JULY 6.

Sketch of the Debate, in Committee of the whole, on the RESIDENCE BILL.

MR. SHERMAN: As this bill respects the permanent residence of the government, which is an important subject—it ought to be a matter of enquiry, Whether the place proposed is the real centre of population and territory or not. He thought that it was too far southward. He moved therefore that the Potowmac should be struck out, and a district to include the town of Baltimore, be inserted.

Mr. Burke seconded this motion.

Mr. Lee desired the gentleman to inform the committee where he meant the temporary residence should be, provided this motion should obtain.

Mr. Sherman said, he had no objection to making Philadelphia the temporary residence, as soon as it was convenient.—He then mentioned several particulars which would render it inconvenient to go there at present.

Mr. Huntington said, that the only reason for removing, which he had ever heard, is, that this place is not so central. If there is any force in the reasoning, he wished not to go to a place less central. He adverted to the mode of conveyance to this place, generally adopted by members to get to the seat of government. He supposed that the present centre was some where between Philadelphia and Baltimore; but the place contemplated is very much removed from the centre, more than 300 miles West. With respect to centrality, he said that it is not an idea which predominates in regard to any other country, of which he knew any thing respecting the geography—other and various important considerations operated in fixing the seat of government.

Mr. White observed, that if this house was alone to be consulted, on the principle of accommodation, Baltimore might answer—but when it is considered that this bill originated in the other house, who have an equal voice with us in determining the question—and in which this place has been repeatedly rejected, it is evident, that if the clause is struck out, the bill will be lost. He then controverted the calculations of the gentleman last speaking, and stated the difference of travel between the Southern and Northern distances, which he made to be 4½ to 1; but he said that so far as respected himself, he should make no difficulty on that account; but the accommodation of the Citizens who may have business at the seat of Government is a consideration of very great importance—with respect to the excentric situation of the seat of Government in other countries; this arose from the mere whims of the sovereigns of those Kingdoms; but modern policy has obliged the people of European countries, (I refer particularly to Great Britain) to fix the seat of government, near the centre of trade—it is the commercial importance of the city of London, which makes it the seat of government—and what is the consequence? London and Westminster, though they united send only 6 members to parliament, have a greater influence on the measures of government, than the whole empire besides. This is a situation in which we do not wish ever to see this country placed.—He concluded by observing, that if this amendment is agreed to, the bill will be lost, and we shall be without either a temporary or permanent residence.

Mr. Lee, after a few introductory observations entered into a consideration of the relative interests of the southern, middle and northern States. He interspersed a variety of reflections, tending to conciliate and blend those different interests—and to disseminate the sentiments of union and concord. He alluded particularly to the great object of funding the debts of the United States—the seat of government will concentrate the public paper—hence he inferred the necessity of a situation from whence all parts of the Union, may be equally benefited.—From these considerations he deduced the necessity of placing

the government in a central situation. He observed that while the present position continued to be the seat of government, the agriculture of the States to the eastward is invigorated and encouraged, while that to the southward is languishing and expiring. He then shewed the fatal tendency of this preponderating encouragement to those parts of the country, already considered as the strongest parts of the Union—and from the natural operation of these principles, he inferred, that the interest of the Southern States must be eventually swallowed up. The decision of the Senate, said he, affords a most favorable opportunity to manifest that unanimity of soul, which shall embrace, upon an extensive liberal system, the best interest of the great whole.—This cannot be done while the present unequal situation of the seat of the government of the United States, continues.—Nations have their passions as well as individuals. He drew an alarming picture of the consequences to be apprehended from distention, ambition and rivalry.—He then gave a pleasing sketch of the happy effects to be derived from a national, generous, and equal attention to the southern and northern interests. Will gentlemen said he blast this prospect by rejecting the bill? I trust they will not.

He then entered into the merits of the question.—The States of Delaware, Philadelphia, Maryland and Virginia, which contribute more than one half to the revenue, and which have the only rival claim to the permanent seat of government are satisfied with the arrangement in the bill: That Philadelphia said he, is the nearest centre of the present wealth and population of the United States, the gentlemen of New-York themselves will confess; the Potowmac will become the nearest centre for a permanent residence probably by the period proposed—to oppose this therefore will be acting from merely local motives.

The gentleman moves to insert Baltimore—Mr. Lee insisted that Baltimore is as far south as the place proposed—besides being exposed by its frontier position on the sea; we are not confined said he to a particular spot on the Potowmac; we may fix on a place as far north as the gentleman from Connecticut wishes; I consider the motion therefore calculated to destroy the bill, and ought to be opposed by every one who is in favor of a Southern situation.

This State has no pretensions to the permanent residence—it is true the citizens of this place have put themselves to great expence to accommodate the government, and are entitled to much praise for their exertions—but he wished to take up the subject on national ground, and to have it decided on principles which apply to the best interests of the whole. He then referred to a map of the Potowmac and the adjacent country which lay on the table, and which had been sent from the executive of the State of Virginia—he referred also to other papers and documents.

Mr. Burke said he wished that the whole business of the temporary and permanent residence might now be settled.—He excupated the members, who are in favor of Baltimore from all design to defeat the present bill. He referred to some observations which had been made on the conduct of the members of the States, south of Virginia, and said that they had consulted the interest of the whole. One reason why he was in favor of the motion was because he preferred Baltimore to Conocogeeque. He thought a populous city better than building a palace in the woods. Another reason was that there was no political necessity existed for removing the Government from New York to Philadelphia. He said that the measure would excite the most turbulent passions in the minds of the citizens. It is unjust to the people of the city to remove from this place said he, till the expence they have incurred is repaid them. It is a breach of honesty and of justice. It is injustice to the state? To the whole nation. He entered into a consideration of their sacrifices and services. He thought it a very extraordinary measure indeed. It is calculated said he to arrest the funding system—and to throw every thing into confusion. If the bill is passed in its present form, Congress will never leave Philadelphia; for the commissioners to be appointed will incur no penalty for a neglect of doing their duty—this is a most essential defect, said he, in the bill, and there are other defects in it. He spoke in handsome terms of the State of Pennsylvania—he said he had as high an

AN E C D O T E.

IT being told ANTIGONUS, in order to intimidate him as he marched to the field of battle, that the enemy would shoot such volleys of arrows, as would intercept the light of the Sun:—"I am glad of it," replied he, "for it being very hot, we shall then fight in the shade."