

tion of that State, as any man whatever, but he was afraid of their influence; and that State was the last in which he would ever consent the permanent seat of government should be. He then adverted to the influence of the members from that State, who by their political management had, he said, raised a storm in the United States.

Here Mr. Burke was called to order—after a short interruption he proceeded, and said a quaker State was a bad neighbourhood for the South-Carolinians—here he adverted to the quaker business last winter. He objected to Philadelphia also, on account of there being no gallery in the house proposed for the accommodation of Congress—an open gallery he considered as a very important check to the Legislature.

Mr. Lawrance.—The gentleman from Virginia has observed that the object of the amendment is to defeat the bill—he has also mentioned the States which are most particularly interested in the question. Mr. Lawrance said the State of New-York might have been considered. He wished the motion might succeed, because he thought that it would conduce to the peace of the Union. He objected to the place proposed for the permanent residence; by the bill it is conceded that the place is not, at present, a suitable position—by what magic can it be made to appear it will be more proper at the end of ten years?—What reason can be given why those parts of the Union should not populate, which are at a distance from the Potowmac, in proportion to those parts in the vicinity of that place. I presume none can be assigned! Why then is a period of ten years to elope, previous to going there? The reason is plain—the people would not now consent to have the government dragged to so remote a part of the United States.—He then adverted to the funding business, and other important matters which remain to be decided on, and very strongly intimated that these questions were to be determined agreeable to the fate of this bill.

He shewed from a variety of particulars, that Philadelphia would become the permanent residence.

He then adverted particularly to the several parts of the bill.—The first was respecting the place where it is proposed to erect the public buildings; he said they could not be erected within the time mentioned, and shewed the various difficulties which would attend the whole business. He then stated the advantages of Baltimore, and said that that place would have obtained in Senate, if the Maryland Senators would have voted for it. He concluded by observing, that as no necessity exists for removing the temporary residence, he hoped that Congress would set down contented where they are.

Mr. Bloodworth observed, that as the funding bill, had been alluded to, he could wish that the objection from that quarter might be taken out of the way, he moved that the committee should rise, in order to take up the Ways and Means.

Mr. Smith, (M.) introduced an address from the inhabitants of Baltimore, to the Members and Senators from that State, which was read. This contained an account of the number of houses and inhabitants of that town, &c. also, the accommodations already made, and the provision to be made to complete every necessary arrangement.

Mr. Carroll mentioned to the committee that there was a memorial of the inhabitants of George-Town, on Potowmac, on the table—which he had presented some days since; and submitted it to the house whether it would be proper to read it.—It was read.

Mr. Lee moved that certain papers received from the executive of Virginia, should be read—which was done.

Mr. Smith, (S. C.) called for the reading of a report of a committee appointed by the old Congress, to view the banks of the Potowmac—which was done.

Mr. Stone.—All we seem to differ about, is whether Baltimore or Potowmac shall be the seat of the government; and if this was all, the delegates of that State might fold their arms and set down contented—but the State of Maryland has been placed in the situation of Tantalus. He then stated how the gentleman had formerly, finally voted, who now appear in favor of Baltimore—had the bill come down from the Senate with Baltimore inserted, instead of Potowmac, he should have had no difficulty in determining how to act—but he conceived that if the amendment now proposed should take place, nothing would be done—and the business will be left in a very inauspicious state—from this and other considerations, he was resolved not to be drawn off from his present determination, by any motion, amendment, or modification of the bill whatever.—With respect to himself, he had no election between the town of Baltimore and the Potowmac; yet as a Marylander, he would, if he saw a prospect of success, vote for the town of Baltimore; but as it respected the United States, he should vote for potowmac—and on this idea he was willing to make some sacrifices. He considered the subject as one of the most painful and disagreeable that could be agitated, and he wished to have the business finally and unalterably fixed.

Mr. Seney also considered this as an unhappy question to come before the house at this time. The State of Maryland was as much divided on the subject as the United States appeared to be; a great rivalry subsists between the Potowmac and Susquehannah rivers; and he doubted not but that when the question was ultimately decided, it would be either on the one or the other of those rivers. He agreed with Mr. Lee, that Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia were the only States who could make any reasonable pretensions to be the seat of government—but a majority of voices from these States had been against the Potowmac. Pennsylvania and Maryland he observed, had given the preference to the Susquehannah. Mr. Seney then noticed some transactions of the legislature of Maryland, which he said clearly evinced their determination to support the pretensions of the Susquehannah. Maryland certainly had an equal right with Pennsylvania and Virginia, to have her interests consulted.

The interests of Maryland, it appeared, were now to be sacrificed to those two adjoining States. And however flattering it may seem, to Maryland, to fix the seat of government on her side of the Potowmac, the real advantages were in a great measure nugatory, as it would be but a very small portion of that State that could reap any benefit therefrom—the real advantages would undoubtedly result to Pennsylvania and Virginia.—It appeared somewhat extraordinary to him, that gentlemen should be willing to confine the residence to a particular spot, previous to their removing to a permanent residence. Why is it necessary to fix upon Philadelphia for ten years?—Surely this is putting the government in a very ineligible situation, for it is by no means improbable that many serious and important occurrences might render a removal highly expedient perhaps unavoidable. Besides, after the government shall have remained ten years in Philadelphia, the probability of quitting it for the Potowmac, appeared to be very slight indeed. For though it was understood by the bill that the offices were to be removed to the Potowmac, yet if a majority in either house were opposed to going there, Congress would remain at Philadelphia, and they would be obliged to repeal the bill from necessity.

Mr. Scot said he should not notice many things which had been offered on the subject, he would only observe, that from the town of Baltimore there is no water conveyance to the interior country—but from the proposed place on the Potowmac, there are 200 miles navigation directly into the heart of the country.—Nor is Baltimore more northerly than the position contemplated.—A connection with the Western country is of the utmost consequence to the peace and union of the United States, let the gentlemen from the sea coast say what they will.

Mr. Madison: In order to decide this question rightly, we ought to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the two places as they relate to the good of the United States. Now, I will defy any gentleman, however sanguine he may be with respect to Baltimore, to point out any substantial advantage that is not common to the Potowmac—and I defy them to disprove, that there are not several important advantages belonging to the Potowmac, which do not appertain to Baltimore. The committee have had ample information with respect to the northern and southern positions of the two places. In point of salubrity of air, without disparaging the pretensions of Baltimore, the Potowmac is at least equally favored in that respect. In regard to centrality of situation, Potowmac has undoubtedly the advantage—in respect to security from invasion, I aver the Potowmac has the advantage also—with relation to the western country there is not a shadow of comparison. If we should go as far South as Baltimore, why not an equal distance south west to the Potowmac?—Those who are acquainted with the country on the Potowmac, and that in the neighborhood of Baltimore, do not hesitate to give the preference to the Potowmac. It is true that Baltimore has respectable resources—her rapid growth is a clear proof of it—but look at the resources of the Potowmac—the great range of rich country that borders on it, and see if there are not advantages that must in a short time produce a commercial town. Sir, a period might be named, not exceeding ten years, within which the town of Baltimore obtained the greater part of its increase and consequence; a period of ten years will produce the same effects on the Potowmac because the same causes exist; and when superadded to this the residence of government shall be there, there can be no doubt but that there will be every accommodation that can be desired.

It is said that before the ten years expire a repeal of the act may take place, and thus Congress be kept at Philadelphia. But what more can we do than pass a law for the purpose? It is not in our power to guard against a repeal—our acts are not like those of the Medes and Persians, unalterable. A repeal is a thing against which no provision can be made. If that is an objection, it holds good against any law that can be passed.

If those States that may have a superiority in Congress at a future day, will pay no respect to the acts of their predecessors or to the public good, there is no power to compel them.

But, I flatter myself that some respect will be paid to the public interest, and to the plighted faith of the government. As to centrality, the best evidence we have at this time in favor of the Potowmac, is the different travel of the members; and this, Sir, proves incontestibly that the proposed place on the Potowmac is near the centre. If any arguments could be brought against it, it is its being too far to the northward. For the mileage south of the Potowmack is 12782 miles, to the north of it 12422. If to this Rhode-Island be added, it will not be more than equal. If the bill once passes, I am not under any apprehensions of a repeal; but if danger of a repeal does exist; it is of that kind against which we cannot guard. Sir, we should calculate on accepting the bill as it now stands; we ought not to risk it by making any amendment. We have it now in our power, to procure a southern position. The opportunity may not again speedily present itself. We know the various and jealous interests that exist on this subject. We should hazard nothing. If Potowmac is struck out, are you sure of getting Baltimore? May no other places be proposed? Instead of Baltimore is it not probable we may have Susquehannah inserted, perhaps the Delaware? Make any amendment, Sir, and the bill will go back to the Senate. Are we sure that it will come back into our possession again? By amending, we give up a certainty for an uncertainty. In my opinion, we shall act wisely, if we accept the bill as it now stands, and I beg leave to press it on gentlemen not to consent to any alteration lest it be wholly defeated, and the prospect of obtaining a southern position vanish for ever.

Mr. Gerry said he rose with greater reluctance on this, than he ever did on any former occasion; and it is because it appears pretty evident the advocates of the bill are sure of a majority, and are determined not to change their minds let what arguments will be offered on the subject—the business of establishing the permanent residence is contrary to the sentiments of a majority of the members of this House—and of the Senate as they have both negatived a bill for this purpose the present session; it is to be regretted that it has ever been brought forward, for it is very evident that it has had a very pernicious influence on the great business of funding the public debt. He then mentioned the former removals of Congress, which had never been complained of—as the public business was never neglected:—He said that if the present bill is carried into execution, a very great uneasiness will ensue—for the measures of Congress, and not their residence are the objects of concern to the people—Those States who think that they shall be injured, it can not be expected will acquiesce; he then gave an account of the process of this measure the last session. The travel, said he, has been mentioned—This he said could not be considered as an argument in favor of the bill, for the expence is not paid by particular States—it comes out of the common treasury. He asserted that the accessibility to New York is better than that to the Potowmac.—He contended the risk by land is greater than that by water. He stated the advantages that the southern members derived from coming to the northward, while on the other hand is there, said he, any thing to balance the risk and difficulties which the northern members must encounter in such a southern situation. He said it was highly unreasonable to fix the seat of government in such a position as to have nine States out of thirteen, to the northward of the place.—He adverted to the sacrifices which the northern States are ready to make in being willing to go so far south as Baltimore. He contended that the explicit consent of the eastern States ought to be obtained before they are dragged still further south. He ridiculed the idea of fixing the government at Conocogeque. He did not think there was any serious intention of ever going to this Indian place. He considered the whole business as a mere manoeuvre. Baltimore holds out the only prospect of a permanent seat of government.—He recapitulated the account which before had been given. From this he adverted to the general expectation of the public with respect to the government's tarrying here till the permanent seat was established.—He particularized the expences that had been incurred by the citizens, and for which they merited great honor.—He said it had been promised to New-York, that this place should be the temporary residence of Congress, and on this engagement they came into an unconditional adoption of the constitution—Should this bill pass, what can it be denominated but a delusion, a deception, sanctioned by Congress itself. He remarked on the several observations offered by Mr. Madison, Mr. Lee, Mr. Stone, and Mr. Scott.

Mr. Vining.—When I find arguments made use of to inflame the minds of gentlemen against the members of this house, I think it my duty to notice such observations: Attempts are made to hold up, in an odious point of light, the members of