

function of law, to gratify every criminal, and hateful passion: It degrades civilization beneath the most barbarous Hordes.

Rouse, and redress your brethren's wrongs, ye abject, base, degenerate Britons.

The ghosts of murdered thousands, conjure you, to break those hell-forged prison bars, that shut out from the innocent, sweet hope, and mercy;—Unlock the infernal doors that impiously divide whom God hath joined;—and hear, O hear, the Children's cries!—Come forth, ye injured, pallid shades of men! ye, who have lingered out an age of torment! lay bare your cruel wounds, and make your country, and even THURLOW\* blush! your tragic stories will unfold, that all the miseries which Prisoners suffer, make but a slender portion of the pungent woes that Prisons breed.

Ye ministers of Hell, who torture Innocence, and sport with ruin! Go liquidate your black accounts with Heaven! There sits ETERNAL JUSTICE, the Balance in his Hand, weighing with equal scales, DEBTOR AND CREDITOR, our NAKED MOTIVES! there, they stand recorded by unerring wisdom! there, the OPPRESSOR meets the AVENGING GOD! there, MELTING MERCY meets its great REWARD! and there, the INJURED ever find REDRESS. E. C.

\* The Lord High Chancellor of Great-Britain, who has uniformly opposed every motion for the relief of distressed debtors.

# SKETCH of PROCEEDINGS of CONGRESS.

In the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES of the UNITED STATES.

Tuesday's Debate on the Proposition of arranging the Executive Departments.

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 1789.

Mr. BOUDINOT, who opened the business as mentioned in our last, made many observations upon the important subject of finance; and adverted to the present state of the funds, shewing the necessity of appointing an officer, or secretary for that department: After the committee had proceeded so far as to adopt the idea of three departments, agreeably to the resolution introduced by Mr. MADISON, the last clause in the preamble of which, subjected the head of each department to removal at the pleasure of THE PRESIDENT, this occasioned a debate. It was urged in objection to the clause, that it was unconstitutional, for it subjected an officer to lose his appointment without forfeiting it, or having any reason assigned: That giving the power to THE PRESIDENT without controul, rendered nugatory the article providing for impeachments: That it would delegate a dangerous authority to the supreme magistrate, and make him absolute: That it ought to be the same power that displaces from, which appoints to, an office: That no such power was specified in the constitution, on the contrary the powers of The President being therein defined, without designating that proposed, it was presumed, that this power could be lodged with safety only in those hands where the constitution had placed it, viz. THE PRESIDENT by and with the advice of the Senate: It was called a monarchical system, and would enable The President to effect arbitrarily, a change of ministry. Many other observations were made by several gentlemen who spoke on this side of the question. In answer, it was said, that the mode of impeachment for crimes, by the Senate, had special reference to certain officers of government, the Judges: That to suppose it extended to all, indiscriminately, was absurd; this would oblige the Senate to be always sitting; this objection proved too much—as even waiters and inferior officers could not be removed on this principle: The clause it was urged, would create that just responsibility in THE PRESIDENT, and all under him, which never could be found in bodies of men: This responsibility would be mutual; The President would feel responsible for the fidelity of those appointed by him, and they would feel responsible to him, and to the public: This responsibility was of the utmost importance—it was expected by the people; and by centering in one, this accountability for the faithful discharge of the duties of the subordinate departments, of the executive, it was the dictate of reason and experience, that the person thus responsible should have the appointment of the officers, on whose conduct the honor and safety of the government and the reputation of THE PRESIDENT were suspended.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20.

Mr. GOODHUE gave notice, that on Friday next he should move for a committee of the whole House to determine the respective allowances for their public services, to be made The President, Vice President, Senators and Representatives of the United States.

In committee of the whole, Mr. TRUMBULL in the chair, on the subject of the three great departments.

The question on the second article of Mr. MADISON'S resolution respecting a "Secretary of the United States for treasury department" occa-

sioned an interesting debate: In opposition to the idea of giving an individual the absolute direction of the finances, it was observed, that the powers and duties proposed to be annexed to this appointment, were so numerous and complicated, that there was not a man to be found in the United States competent to their discharge: That the danger from corruption and undue influence was greater from one man in so important an office, than if the power was divided equally between a number, who would be mutual checks to each other; that it would be unconstitutional, as it would supercede in a great measure the interference of the Senate, who were appointed a council to advise The President in the execution of the government—for the creation of a financier, with all the pomp and powers of office, would be the establishment of what might be called a ministry;—that experience had taught us, that the appointment of such an officer would not meet the ideas of the people, and no such officer had been created in the individual governments.

These observations were followed by a motion, for an amendment, by striking out "Secretary for the treasury department," and substituting a clause, providing for the appointing a board of commissioners.

On the other side of the subject, it was said, that the superiority of an individual, possessing competent abilities to conduct this department, over a number of commissioners was demonstrated, by the experience of the public; that there was a radical deficiency in the very nature of boards and commissioners productive of perpetual obstructions in their transactions, destructive of harmony, and that decision and dispatch, which are the soul of public business; that this was confirmed by a retrospect of the late Financier's energy and spirit, contrasted with the operation of boards and committees: Under the direction of that man, public business had been conducted upon enlarged principles, and with a simplicity and promptitude, that had saved our finances from destruction, and given a new face to our affairs: Immense savings were made in every department, and order restored where before confusion and distraction prevailed: Under Commissioners, the finances had been in a state of darkness; uncertainty and indecision marked their transactions: We have realized perplexity and delays necessarily attendant on these inefficient systems; the idea of responsibility is weakened by them, till it loses its influence entirely. The question on the amendment was negatived by a large majority.

It was then moved, that a clause should be added, instituting a board of treasury under the superintendence of the financier.

This motion was put and lost.

The question, whether this officer should be removable by The President, passed in the affirmative.

The third article, providing for the establishment of a Secretary of the United States for the war department, removable by The President, was also voted in the affirmative.

Mr. VINING then proposed the addition of a fourth department: The Secretary of the United States for the domestic department: He enforced the proposition by a number of observations, upon the expediency, importance and absolute necessity of such an establishment.

The creation of this department was objected to for the present; as the various objects which it was designed to take up, might come with propriety within the departments already voted; but if another should be found necessary, it could be established at any time.

The committee rose without coming to a vote upon the proposition—when the House adjourned.

THURSDAY, MAY 21.

Resolved, that the House now resume the consideration of the three great departments, when it was moved, that the words "to aid The President in the discharge of his important trust" be struck out, which passed in the affirmative; the word "Executive" was then added after the word subordinate.

Mr. VINING proposed, that the House should then resolve itself into a committee of the whole, to take into consideration the expediency of establishing a fourth department.

The rising of the House to form into a committee upon this proposition was opposed, and after some conversation Mr. VINING consented to suspend his motion.

It was then moved, that a committee should be appointed to bring in a bill, or bills, pursuant to the resolution for instituting the three subordinate executive departments.—Voted in the affirmative.

Voted, that this committee consist of eleven—and the ballots being taken, the following gentlemen were elected, viz. Mr. BALDWIN, Mr. MADISON, Mr. FITZSIMONS, Mr. BURKE, Mr. GERRY, Mr. BENSON, Mr. LIVERMORE, Mr. WADSWORTH, Mr. CADWALLADER, Mr. VINING, and Mr. BOUDINOT.

The committee of elections, to whom were referred the several petitions from the citizens of New-Jersey, respecting the election in that State for Representatives in Congress, reported, that a committee should be appointed, with authority

to hear evidence on the subject of those petitions; that a day should be appointed on which this committee should sit for the above purpose; and that the Speaker should be requested to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Governor of New-Jersey, with a request that he would cause the same to be published in the several newspapers within that State.

The order of the day was then called for to take up the memorial of David Ramsay, respecting the election of WILLIAM SMITH.

On which Mr. VINING moved to postpone the order of the day, and to go into committee for the purpose of determining whether a department for domestic affairs should be established.

The question on this motion being put was lost.

The House then proceeded on the petition of Dr. Ramsay, to examine the vouchers and evidence of the facts alleged by both parties, and having made some progress in this examination—Adjourned.

FRIDAY, MAY 22.

The House this day resumed the consideration of the report of the committee on Dr. Ramsay's petition, respecting Mr. Smith's election.

Mr. LAWRENCE proposed, that the report should be re-committed, and the committee instructed to report a state of facts to the House, that a more competent idea may be formed previous to a decision.

Mr. LIVERMORE objected to a re-commitment; the facts being different, it was probable that quite different sentiments would be formed upon them—He thought that it would be preferable to have the whole state of the evidence laid before the House, and considering themselves in their proper character upon this occasion, that of Judges, they might form an opinion upon the amount of the various facts, in which they might be more unanimous than upon the plan proposed by the motion.

Mr. BOUDINOT was in favour of a re-commitment, as he conceived it of the greatest importance that full justice should be done to the subject, by a very full and complete investigation; it might save future trouble; it would be establishing an important precedent, in which the greatest precision should be attended to.

Mr. THATCHER did not see the propriety of the motion—He observed, that to empower a committee to form a state of facts, on which the House was to found their judgment, would be substituting the committee's opinion, upon a very important subject, instead of that of the House: The House is the only proper tribunal in the present case, and could not with propriety transmit their powers to any other persons. The facts contained in the petition are full and clear; they speak for themselves, and are not to be enlarged or curtailed. Can any new facts be adduced? Can a committee investigate any which the House cannot? From the difficulty attending the statement of these facts, owing to the different opinions of their importance; and as the committee might not bring forward those that some gentlemen might think the most essential, he thought the motion would involve a very tedious delay of the business.

Mr. LAWRENCE observed, that the House is competent to an investigation of facts, either in itself, or by a committee—and so far from a substitution, or the divesting ourselves of a power of judging freely, by the adoption of committees, it is the invariable practice of the House upon almost every occasion—it is done daily—the question is, which is the best mode of bringing facts before us? a committee has obviously the advantage; and when a calm and deliberate investigation has taken place, the result is brought before the House, for their determination, which follows of course and with the greatest propriety. Upon the plan which some men appear solicitous to adopt, we shall not get through the business to day—but the House once in possession of the facts, will be able to judge.

Mr. MADISON was opposed to a re-commitment, as a dilatory measure—wished the committee had reported a decision, for the consideration of the House; and proposed, that a motion which was introduced yesterday, by the gentleman from New-York, (Mr. BENSON) might now be brought forward again, as the most expeditious method of bringing the subject to a close: This proposition was, that the several facts should be read over one by one, and a decision had upon each.

Mr. PAGE objected to a re-commitment—he supposed every member had made up a judgment upon the papers which had been read, and therefore could see no use in adopting the motion.

Mr. BOUDINOT said, that he thought it of great consequence that the House should go into a minute discussion of the subject, in order to have a full entry made upon the journals—that justice could not be done without this investigation—this should be done either by the House or a committee—he felt solicitous that such a record might now be made of the present case, as might apply in all future ones; any ways similar—that as this was the first instance of a disputed election, which had come before the House,