

or deviates from the end of its institution, and cannot be corrected, that the people may form themselves into another, avoiding the defects of the former. This we would now wish to have effected, as soon as the general consent approves, and the wisdom of our councils will admit; that we may, as far as possible, keep up our primary object, and not lose ourselves in hankering after a reconciliation with *Great Britain*. Good Government alone, and the prosperity of mankind, can be in the divine intention. We pray, therefore, that, under the superintending providence of the Ruler of the Universe, a Government may be established in *America*, the most free, happy, and permanent, that human wisdom can contrive, and the perfection of man maintain.

Published by order of the Committee:

ROLFE ELDRIDGE, *Clerk*.

VIRGINIA CONVENTION TO MARYLAND CONVENTION.

Virginia, May 22, 1776.

I am honoured with the commands of the General Convention of this Colony, to transmit you the enclosed resolutions, which they have thought it indispensably necessary to enter into at this important crisis; requesting you will communicate their contents to the Convention of your Colony, for their consideration.

I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant,
EDMUND PENDLETON, *President*.

To the President of the honourable Convention of *Maryland*.

Virginia, in Convention, Wednesday, May 15, 1776.

Present one hundred and twelve Members.

Forasmuch as all the endeavours of the United Colonies, by the most decent representations and petitions to the King and Parliament of *Great Britain*, to restore peace and security to *America* under the *British* Government, and a reunion with that people upon just and liberal terms, instead of a redress of grievances, have produced from an imperious and vindictive Administration increased insult, oppression, and a vigorous attempt to effect our total destruction. By a late act, all these Colonies are declared to be in rebellion, and out of the protection of the *British* crown; our properties subject to confiscation; our people, when captivated, compelled to join in the murder and plunder of their relations and countrymen; and all former rapine and oppression of *Americans* declared legal and just. Fleets and Armies are raised, and the aid of foreign troops engaged to assist these destructive purposes. The King's representative in this Colony hath not only withheld all the powers of Government from operating for our safety, but, having retired on board an armed ship, is carrying on a piratical and savage war against us, tempting our slaves, by every artifice, to resort to him, and training and employing them against their masters.

In this state of extreme danger we have no alternative left but an abject submission to the will of those overbearing tyrants, or a total separation from the Crown and Government of *Great Britain*, uniting and exerting all the strength of *America* for defence, and forming alliances with foreign powers for commerce and aid in war.

Wherefore, appealing to the Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of former declarations, expressing our desire to preserve the connection with that nation, and that we are driven from that inclination by their wicked counsels, and the eternal laws of self-preservation:

Resolved, unanimously, That the Delegates appointed to represent this Colony in General Congress be instructed to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent States; absolved from all allegiance to, or dependance upon, the Crown or Parliament of *Great Britain*; and that they give the assent of this Colony to such declaration, and to whatever measures may be thought proper and necessary by the Congress for forming foreign alliances, and a confederation of the Colonies, at such time and in the manner as to them shall seem best. *Provided*, that the power of forming Government for and the regulations of the internal concerns of the Colony, be left to the respective Colonial Legislatures.

Resolved, unanimously, That a Committee be appointed to prepare a Declaration of Rights, and such a plan of Go-

vernment as will be most likely to maintain peace and order in this Colony, and secure substantial and equal liberty to the people.*

EDMUND PENDLETON, *President*.

EXTRACTS FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONVENTION OF MARYLAND, HELD AT THE CITY OF ANNAPOLIS, MAY 15, 1776.

Whereas it is necessary that the peace and good order of this Province should be maintained as much as possible, and it appearing to this Convention that sundry officers, appointed for that purpose, have refused to take upon them the respective trusts to which they have been appointed, alleging scruples to take the usual oaths to Government, during the unhappy differences with *Great Britain*:

Resolved, That the said oaths be dispensed with during the said differences; and that the persons already appointed, or who may hereafter be appointed, do qualify themselves for their trust, by taking the respective oaths of office to which they are or may be appointed. And all persons concerned either in administering or taking the said oaths of office, independent of the said oaths to the Government, may rest assured that proper measures shall be taken, upon the settlement of those differences, (an event we most ardently wish for,) to indemnify them against any penalties directed by any laws to be inflicted on persons acting as aforesaid, without having first taken the said oaths.

May 21.—On reading a second time, and considering the resolution of Congress of the 15th day of this instant, transmitted to this Convention by the Deputies attending for this Province in Congress, by express:

Resolved, unanimously, That the people of this Province have the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police of this Province.

Resolved, unanimously, That it is the opinion of this Convention, that this Convention hath ample power to draw the whole force of this Province into action against the armed force that is or may be employed to carry into execution the several unconstitutional and oppressive acts of the *British* Parliament for laying taxes in *America*, to enforce the collection of those taxes, and for altering and changing the constitution and internal police of some of the United Colonies.

Resolved, unanimously, That this Province has hitherto exerted itself, and will, upon all occasions, continue to exert itself with cheerfulness and alacrity in the common cause, agreeable to the faith pledged to the union of the Colonies; and if it shall appear to this Province necessary to enter into further compact with the other Colonies, for the preservation of the constitutional rights of *America*, this Province will enter into such further engagements for the purpose.

Resolved, unanimously, That this Convention, by a resolution of the 15th day of this instant, hath made sufficient provision to prevent a necessity for any person within this Province now taking the oaths for the support of Government under the Crown of *Great Britain*; and that it is the opinion of this Convention that it is necessary that the exercise of every kind of authority under the said Crown should be now totally suppressed in this Province, and all the powers of Government exerted under the authority of the people.

Resolved, That the Honourable *Matthew Tilghman*, Esq., and *Thomas Johnson*, Junior, *Robert Alexander*, *Samuel Chase*, *Robert Goldsborough*, *William Paca*, *Thomas Stone*,

* *WILLIAMSBURGH, May 11, 1776*.—On *Wednesday* last the honourable Convention of this Colony came to the unanimous resolution of giving instruction to our Delegates in Congress, at *Philadelphia*, to propose a final separation of these Colonies from *Great Britain*, by declaring them free and independent States. The day following the troops in this city, with the train of artillery, were drawn up, and went through their firings and various other military manœuvres, with the greatest exactness; a Continental union flag was displayed upon the Capitol, and in the evening many of the inhabitants illuminated their houses.

Yesterday, being the day appointed by the honourable the Continental Congress for a day of Fasting and Prayer throughout the thirteen United Colonies, the Reverend *Thomas Price* delivered an excellent sermon in this city, to a very crowded audience, from these words: "Hearken ye, all *Judah*, and ye inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, and thou King *Jehoshaphat*; thus saith the Lord unto you: Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but *God's*." 2 *Chronicles*, chapter xx, verse 15.—*Va. Gaz.*

Mr. *Richard Lee*, from the Committee of Publick Claims, reported that the Committee have had under their consideration two Petitions to them referred, and had come to the following Resolutions thereupon; which he read in his place, and afterwards delivered in at the Clerk's table, where the same were again twice read, and agreed to:

Resolved, That the Petition of *Humphrey Hendrick*, for further allowance for his services, in dressing and sighting Rifles for Captain *Cocke's* Company of Regulars, is reasonable, and that the Petitioner ought to be paid the sum of £1 12s. 3d. more than the allowance already made him by the Committee of Safety for those services.

Resolved, That the Petition of *Alexander Stewart*, as a volunteer in Captain *Moffatt's* Company, who was wounded in the thigh in an engagement with the *Indians* on the *Ohio*, and by means thereof rendered incapable at present of getting a livelihood by labour, is reasonable, and that he ought to be allowed the sum of £5 per annum, for four years, towards his support.

Mr. *Richard Lee*, from the Committee of Publick Claims, reported that the Committee have had under their consideration the Petition of *James Turner* and *William Terry*, to them referred, and had agreed upon a Report, and come to the following Resolution thereupon, which he read in his place, and afterwards delivered in at the Clerk's table, where the same was again twice read, and agreed to:

It appears to the Committee, that, upon application having been made by the Chairman of the Committee of *Orange* County, in the Province of *North-Carolina*, to the Commanding Officer of *Halifax* County, in this Colony, for assistance to suppress the Insurgents in that Province, the Petitioners, with two Companies of Militia, were ordered to march to their assistance, but before the Petitioners could get to the place of rendezvous, they were informed, by a letter from the Commanding Officer at *Hillsborough*, that such assistance would be unnecessary, and they returned home.

Resolved, That the said Petition is reasonable, and that the said *James Turner* ought to be allowed the sum of £22 3s. 6d., and the said *William Terry* the sum of £23 10s. 7d., as pay for themselves and their men, and for Wagonage, Provisions, and Ammunition, furnished them.

On a motion made, *Resolved*, That it be recommended to the Clergy of the Church of *England*, and to the licensed Ministers of all other denominations, that they preach Charity Sermons at their respective Churches and Meeting-Houses, and make collections for the relief of our poor distressed fellow-subjects who may be compelled, for the safety of this Colony, to remove from their habitations, and pay the contributions so collected to the Commissioners appointed to provide for their removal.

Ordered, That Mr. *Richard Cary* and Mr. *Wilkinson* be added to the Committee of Publick Claims.

Adjourned till to-morrow, ten o'clock.

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Wednesday, May 15, 1776.

Mr. *Cary*, from the Committee of Privileges and Elections, reported that the Committee had, according to order, had under their consideration the Petition of *Ralph Wormeley*, Jun., and had come to the following Resolution thereupon; which he read in his place, and afterwards delivered in at the Clerk's table, where the same was again twice read, and agreed to:

Resolved, That the said *Ralph Wormeley* having discovered, in his letter to *John Grymes*, a disposition unfriendly and dangerous to the rights of this country, ought to be confined to the County of *Berkeley*, and that part of his father's estate which lies in the County of *Frederick*; that he be allowed twenty days from this time to remove himself to the said place, and that he give bond and security, in the sum of ten thousand Pounds, not to depart without those limits until he shall be permitted so to do, on his sincere contrition and future good behaviour, by the Convention, or others having the Executive powers of Government during their recess, nor give intelligence to, or in any manner aid or assist the enemy, and in all things conduct himself conformably to the measures and ordinances of the Convention; and that Brigadier-General *Lewis* be requested to send a subaltern officer with the said *Wormeley* to the County of *Berkeley*, at his expense. And the Committee are induced to agree to this

Resolution, because the said *Wormeley* hath asked pardon, and shown great contrition for his unworthy conduct.

Ordered, That the said *Ralph Wormeley* be discharged from his confinement, on entering into bond as aforesaid.

Ordered, That all publick claims be delivered of course to the Clerk of the Committee of Claims, and that they report the same, together with their opinion thereupon, to the Convention.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the Commanding Officer of the Troops to seize and secure any Slaves which may be sent by Lord *Dunmore*, or any of the Navy, with flags of truce, and that he make them acquainted with his determination on this subject.

The Convention then, according to the Order of the Day, resolved itself into a Committee on the state of the Colony, and after some time spent therein, Mr. President resumed the chair, and Mr. *Cary* reported, that the Committee had, according to order, had under their consideration the state of the Colony, and had come to the following Resolutions thereupon; which he read in his place, and afterwards delivered in at the Clerk's table, where the same were again twice read, and unanimously agreed to, one hundred and twelve Members being present:

Forasmuch as all the endeavours of the United Colonies, by the most decent representations and petitions to the King and Parliament of *Great Britain*, to restore peace and security to *America* under the *British* Government, and a reunion with that people upon just and liberal terms, instead of a redress of grievances, have produced, from an imperious and vindictive Administration, increased insult, oppression, and a vigorous attempt to effect our total destruction:—By a late act all these Colonies are declared to be in rebellion, and out of the protection of the *British* Crown, our properties subjected to confiscation, our people, when captivated, compelled to join in the murder and plunder of their relations and countrymen, and all former rapine and oppression of *Americans* declared legal and just; fleets and armies are raised, and the aid of foreign troops engaged to assist these destructive purposes; the King's representative in this Colony hath not only withheld all the powers of Government from operating for our safety, but, having retired on board an armed ship, is carrying on a piratical and savage war against us, tempting our slaves by every artifice to resort to him, and training and employing them against their masters. In this state of extreme danger, we have no alternative left but an abject submission to the will of those overbearing tyrants, or a total separation from the Crown and Government of *Great Britain*, uniting and exerting the strength of all *America* for defence, and forming alliances with foreign Powers for commerce and aid in war:—Wherefore, appealing to the Searcher of hearts for the sincerity of former declarations expressing our desire to preserve the connection with that nation, and that we are driven from that inclination by their wicked councils, and the eternal law of self-preservation:

Resolved, unanimously, That the Delegates appointed to represent this Colony in General Congress be instructed to propose to that respectable body to declare the United Colonies free and independent States, absolved from all allegiance to, or dependance upon, the Crown or Parliament of *Great Britain*; and that they give the assent of this Colony to such declaration, and to whatever measures may be thought proper and necessary by the Congress for forming foreign alliances, and a Confederation of the Colonies, at such time and in the manner as to them shall seem best: *Provided*, That the power of forming Government for, and the regulations of the internal concerns of each Colony, be left to the respective Colonial Legislatures.

Resolved, unanimously, That a Committee be appointed to prepare a Declaration of Rights, and such a plan of Government as will be most likely to maintain peace and order in this Colony, and secure substantial and equal liberty to the people.

And a Committee was appointed of the following gentlemen: Mr. *Archibald Cary*, Mr. *Meriwether Smith*, Mr. *Mercer*, Mr. *Henry Lee*, Mr. Treasurer, Mr. *Henry*, Mr. *Dandridge*, Mr. *Edmund Randolph*, Mr. *Gilmer*, Mr. *Bland*, Mr. *Digges*, Mr. *Carrington*, Mr. *Thomas Ludwell Lee*, Mr. *Cabell*, Mr. *Jones*, Mr. *Blair*, Mr. *Fleming*, Mr. *Tazewell*, Mr. *Richard Cary*, Mr. *Bullitt*, Mr. *Watts*, Mr. *Banister*, Mr. *Page*, Mr. *Starke*, Mr. *David Mason*, Mr. *Adams*, Mr. *Read*, and Mr. *Thomas Lewis*.