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Mr Chairman

Speech of Dr. Franklin  
in Convention

1787

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It has given me great Pleasure to observe that till this Point, the Proposition of Representation, came before us, our Debates were carry'd on with great Coolness and Temper. If any thing of a contrary kind has on this Occasion appear'd, I hope it will not be repeated; for we are sent <sup>hither</sup> to consult, not to contend, with each other; and Declaration of a fix'd Opinion & determin'd Resolution, never to change it. we are not enlighten'd by ~~debates~~ <sup>debates</sup> of ~~contending to defeat at home what may be considered here~~ <sup>neither enlighten nor convince</sup>. Positiveness, and Warmth on one Side naturally beget their like on the other, and tend to create and augment Discord, and Division, in a great Concern, wherein Harmony and Union are extremely necessary, to give Weight to our Counsels, and render them effectual in promoting & securing the common Good.

I must own that I was originally of Opinion it would be better if every Member of Congress, <sup>or</sup> our national Council, were to <sup>be</sup> consider'd <sup>himself</sup> rather as a Representative of the Whole, than as an Agent for the Interests of a particular State; ~~and yet~~ in which Case the Proportion of Members for each State would be of less Consequence, & it would not be very material whether they voted by States or individually. But as this is not to be expected, I now think there <sup>should</sup> be a Number of <sup>Representatives</sup> should bear some Proportion to the Number of the Represented, and

and that the Decisions should be by the Majority of Members, not by the Majority of States. This is objected from an Apprehension that the greater States would then swallow up the Smaller. I do not <sup>at present</sup> clearly see what Advantage the greater States could ~~possibly~~ propose to themselves, <sup>by swallowing the smaller</sup> and therefore do not apprehend it would be the case they would attempt it. I recollect that in the Beginning of this Century, when the Union was proposed of the two Kingdoms, England & Scotland, the Scotch Patriots were full of Fears, that unless they had an equal Number of Representatives in Parliament, they should be ruined by the Superiority of the English. They <sup>finally</sup> agreed however that they were to have only Forty Members in the House of Commons, and that only Sixteen of their Peers <sup>were to</sup> sit in the House of Lords. A very great Superiority of Numbers! And yet to this Day I do not recollect ~~that~~ <sup>date</sup> that any thing has been done in the Parliament of Great Britain to the Prejudice of Scotland; and whoever looks over the Lists of Publick Officers Civil and Military of that Nation will find, I believe, that the ~~date~~ North Britons ~~have~~ enjoy at least their full proportion of Emolument.

The different Proportions of Importance in the Union, of the two Nations should be attended to, by ~~which~~ whereby

But, Sir, in the present Mode of Voting by States, it is equally in the Power of the lesser States to swallow up the greater; and this is mathematically demonstrable. To suppose, for example, that 7 Smaller States had each 3 Members in the House, and the six larger to have one with another 6 Members. And that upon a Question, two Members of each

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each smaller State should be in the Affirmative, and one in the Negative, they will make

Affirmatives — 14      Negatives 7

And that all the larger States should be unanimously in the negative, they would make

Negatives 36  
So all 49

It is then apparent that the 14 carry the Question against <sup>the 41,</sup> and the Minority overpowers the Majority, contrary to the common Practice of Assemblies in all Countries and Ages.

The greater States, Sir, are naturally unwilling to have their Property left in the Disposition of the smaller, as the smaller are to have theirs in the Disposition of the greater. An honourable Gentleman has to avoid this Difficulty, hinted a Proposition of equalizing the States. I should, for my own Part, not be against such a Measure, if it might be found practicable. Formerly, indeed, when ~~and~~ <sup>almost every</sup> Province had a different Constitution ~~and~~ <sup>some</sup> with <sup>greater</sup> others with fewer Privileges, it was of some Importance to the Borders, when their Boundaries were contested, whether, by running the Division Lines they were placed on one Side or the other. At present when such Differences are done away, it is left material. The Interest of a State is made up of the Interests of its individual Members. If they are not injured, the State is not injured. Small States are more easily well & happily governed than large ones. If therefore in such an <sup>equal</sup> Division, it should be found necessary to diminish Pennsylvania, I should

It appears to me an equitable measure and

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