

Massachusetts Bay and American Colonial Union, 1754

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IT IS becoming increasingly clear to students that Massachusetts Bay played a far more important part in promoting the idea of American colonial union in 1754 than has previously been supposed. That the province should have done so is not surprising since it was the most dynamic of all the colonies in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It absorbed the Province of Maine, came very close to swallowing up New Hampshire, established a virtual monopoly of the cod and mackerel fisheries in New England and Nova Scotian waters, dominated the carrying trade throughout the area from Newfoundland to Pennsylvania, and had commercial relations of the highest economic importance with the West Indies. Massachusetts Bay was also fortunate to have had in the middle of the eighteenth century the most statesmanlike, energetic and forceful Governor in British North America, William Shirley, whose views on issues facing the British Empire in the New World transcended the boundaries and direct interests of this one colony. Moreover, his relations with the members of the Great and General Court were cordial and his prestige was high throughout New England. For it was Shirley who had won over his own Assembly and then the Governors of the other New England colonies to implement his plan for the capture of the French stronghold of Louisbourg on Cape

Breton Island (Isle Royale)—a plan carried to successful conclusion in the spring of 1745.

Eight years later clouds were again gathering over British North America. The French in Canada had begun to penetrate certain vital areas esteemed to be included within the folds of the British Empire. Not only were they inciting the French-speaking Acadians of Nova Scotia against the government of that province, but also the Indian tribes in western New York and in the Valley of the Ohio against the English colonial traders. Informed of these ominous developments the British Board of Trade in September 1753 addressed a circular letter to the Governors of New York, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts Bay requesting them to send commissioners into the Iroquois Indian country in order to reestablish friendly relations with the powerful Confederation of the Six Nations. The date of the conference was fixed for June 14, 1754, and the place, Albany. All the colonies specifically asked to attend agreed to do so with the exception of Virginia and New Jersey. Upon the sudden death of Governor Sir Danvers Osborne the task of organizing the conference fell to Lieutenant Governor James de Lancey of New York.

It appears that at the urging of Governor Shirley, de Lancey decided to invite to the Congress commissioners from Connecticut and Rhode Island as well as from the colonies named by the Board of Trade.¹ He therefore wrote the Governors of these two colonies urging them to appoint delegates who could meet at Albany with the other commissioners on the day set "not only to join with the other Governments concerning Indian affairs, but to concert some

¹ On March 5, 1754, de Lancey wrote to Shirley: "I thank you for what you say as to Connecticut & Rhode Island. . . . I shall write to them both on this subject" (Massachusetts Archives, 4:442-4.)

plan for the defence of these countries against the French & their Indians. . . ."² They agreed to do so.³

By the beginning of 1754 it is obvious that Shirley had in mind the creation of a much more formal union of colonial forces and resources than had been welded together under his aegis for the Cape Breton campaign. Writing to the Earl of Holderness on January 7, he pointed out the great difficulties involved in the proposed assignment by the government at home of quotas of men and money to be used for the common defence of the colonies. In this connection he wrote:

. . . that nothing would contribute more effectually to secure His Majesty's subjects and territories upon this continent, against the rapid progress, which the French seem to be making in perfecting a long line of Forts upon our backs . . . and to bring the Indians to a dependance upon the English, than a well concerted scheme, for uniting all His Majesty's colonies . . . in a mutual defence of each other closely carried into execution.⁴

This union, he must have reasoned, should include all the New England colonies that had participated in the late campaign. From that experience they had learned the advantages of united action under a single head. The participating colonies could therefore be counted upon to become the nucleus of any union that might be created to deal with an even greater peril in the future. Indeed, the colonies participating in the reduction of Cape Breton and in the Crown Point expedition were the only North American colonies ever to voluntarily co-operate in a joint enterprise since the close of Queen Anne's War early in the cen-

² See, for example, James de Lancey to Governor Wolcott, March 19, 1754, *Wolcott Papers*, Connecticut Historical Society Collections, XVI, 437-8.

³ See, for example, Roger Wolcott to James de Lancey, April 5, 1754, in which the Governor agreed to lay the matter before the Assembly in the May meeting. *Ibid.*, XVI, 438-9.

⁴ E. B. O'Callaghan and B. Fernow, eds., *New York Colonial Documents* (Albany, 1853-87, 15 vols.), VI, 822-5; see also C. H. Lincoln, ed., *Correspondence of William Shirley* (New York, 1912, 2 vols.), II, 18-23.

ture. But with New England taking the lead, other colonies would doubtless fall in line to create a union for mutual defence.

On April 2 the Governor, addressing the Assembly on behalf of the plan to send commissioners to the Albany Congress, declared:

Such a Union of Councils . . . may lay a foundation for a general one among all His Majesty's colonies for . . . mutual Support and Defence. . . . For forming this general union, Gentlemen, there is no Time to be lost: The French seem to have advanc'd further toward making themselves Masters of this Continent within these last five or six Years, than they have done ever since the first Beginning of their Settlements upon it. . . .⁵

In a joint reply on April 9 the two houses stated:

Your Excellency must be sensible that an Union of the several Governments for their mutual Defence, and for the Annoyance of the Enemy, has long been desired by this Province, and Proposals made for this Purpose; We are still in the same Sentiments, and shall use our Endeavours to effect it.⁶

In harmony with this decision the following men were chosen by the Council and the House of Representatives as commissioners to the Congress: Thomas Hutchinson, a member of the Council who was by now the most prominent man in the province outside of Shirley and had been in the past repeatedly elected as Speaker of the House of Representatives, Colonel John Chandler, also a member of the Council and Judge of the Worcester County Court, Colonel Oliver Partridge of Hatfield, certainly one of the leading men in western Massachusetts and later a delegate to the Stamp Act Congress, Samuel Wells of Boston, and John Worthington of Springfield—the last three, members of the House of Representatives and men who took a leading part in its

⁵ *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1753-1754* (Boston, 1955), pp. 266-70. For Shirley's alarming address to the two houses of March 28, 1754, on the French advances see *ibid.*, pp. 263-6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-3.

deliberations. These commissioners were thereupon instructed by the General Court on April 19 to work for "a general, firm & perpetual union & confederacy [of the colonies], for mutual assistance by men or money or both, in peace & in war."⁷

It should be noted in passing that these men were all, what might be called, Shirley men. Partridge, Wells, and Worthington had earlier in the year voted in the House, but without success, in favor of a proposal to give the Governor extra compensation for his special services in behalf of the province while in England the preceding year,⁸ and as members of the Council, Hutchinson and Chandler had had intimate relations with him. In view of Shirley's zeal for promoting a "well concerted scheme" of colonial union and the nature of the leading instructions they had received, it is hard to believe that the commissioners took no steps to formulate some plan for concerted action or that Shirley was not consulted in the course of its preparation.

While plans for a colonial union had been formulated by various individuals from time to time in both the seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth, the importance of the ideas of a native of Massachusetts Bay, who had become the leading citizen of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin, are of especial interest. In 1751 Archibald Kennedy, the Collector of Customs and Receiver

⁷ Massachusetts Archives, 4:471. By Shirley's commission, also dated April 19, 1754, the men were to be appointed to represent the province at the Congress not only for confirming and establishing the attachment of the Indians "to his Majesty's subjects on this continent" but "also for entering into articles of Union and Confederation with the aforesaid Governments [represented at the Congress] for the general defence of his Majesty's subjects and interests in North America, as well in time of peace as of war". Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 3rd ser., V, 9-10.

⁸ *Journals of the House of Representatives, 1753-1754*, pp. 150-3. Shirley, as is well known, was appointed in 1750 one of two British representatives on an Anglo-French commission constituted to settle—short of war, if possible—all territorial disputes relating to the New World. For the account of the work of the commission see the writer's *The British Empire before the American Revolution*, V, Chap. 10.

General for New York, published anonymously his *Importance of Gaining and Preserving the Friendship of the Indians to the British Interest, Considered*. Appended to it (pp. 27-31) was a letter to James Parker, the printer who was planning to bring out the pamphlet.⁹ This letter was written by Benjamin Franklin¹⁰ and gave his views on the type of union he would like to see created and the means to deal with the problems involved. He first laid down as a fundamental proposition that it should be a "voluntary Union entered into by the Colonies themselves. . . ." His reason for this was that it "would be preferable to one impos'd by Parliament, for it would be perhaps not much more difficult to procure, and more easy to alter and improve, as Circumstances should require and Experience direct. . . ." As the other chief features of his plan he proposed "a general Council form'd by all the Colonies, and a general Governor appointed by the Crown to preside in that Council, or in some Manner to concur with and confirm their Acts and take Care of the Execution [of them]; every Thing relating to Indian Affairs and the Defence of the Colonies, might be properly put under this Management."¹¹ Such were his ideas of a colonial union in 1751.

By June 1754 Franklin had changed his views on one of the most vital features of his proposals for union. He had given up the idea that it should be a voluntary union. In

⁹ Kennedy had sent the manuscript to Franklin for comment before its publication. In 1750 Kennedy had put out his *Observations on the Importance of the Northern Colonies under Proper Regulations*, also anonymously and published by Parker, on steps that could properly be taken to add to the prosperity of the Empire and especially that of what he called the "Northern Colonies" as distinct from the British West Indies which he called the "Southern Colonies."

¹⁰ See Kennedy to Cadwallader Colden, April 15, 1751, *Cadwallader Colden Papers*, IV, 264; see also L. C. Wroth, *An American Bookshelf, 1755* (Philadelphia and London, 1934), pp. 120-1.

¹¹ John Bigelow, ed., *The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1887-8, 10 vols.), II, 217-20; this is also given in A. H. Smyth, ed., *Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1905-7, 10 vols.), III, 40-5.

his "Short Hints toward a Scheme for Uniting the Northern Colonies" he was prepared to give Parliament the decisive role in its establishment. After outlining the plan in some detail, a plan that closely corresponded to the views expressed three years earlier, he concluded it with the following significant paragraph:

The scheme, being first well considered, corrected, and improved by the commissioners at Albany, to be sent home, and an act of Parliament obtained for establishing it.¹²

This calls for an explanation.

Why did Franklin now decide that, after the commissioners had improved his "Short Hints" and approved a final plan for union, the colonial governments should be ignored and Parliament should be called upon to implement it? The key to this change in attitude may perhaps be found in his relations with the Bostonian, Dr. William Clarke, whom he appears to have held in high regard and who likewise was interested in some type of colonial union and also was deeply concerned over frontier developments.¹³ Franklin's attitude toward Clarke, whom he called "a very intelligent writer," is indicated by the fact that when Clarke published in Boston in 1755 his *Observations on the late and present Conduct of the French* there appeared as an addendum to it "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind" prepared by Franklin in 1751.¹⁴ On May 6, 1754, Clarke wrote to Franklin indicating that he was returning "the papers, with my hearty thanks for the trouble you

¹² *Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, III, 197-9.

¹³ For William Clarke (Clark), see C. K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates* (Boston, 1951), VIII, 12-19.

¹⁴ Governor Shirley, it may be noted, encouraged Franklin to attach his essay to Clarke's; both essays appeared anonymously. See Franklin to Richard Jackson, October 7, 1755, in Carl Van Doren, ed., *Letters and Papers of Benjamin Franklin and Richard Jackson, 1753-1785* (Philadelphia, 1947), pp. 56-7; and Franklin to William Strahan, October 7, 1755, *Complete Works of Franklin*, X, 273-4. The essay in its complete form is in *Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, III, 63-73, just as it appeared in the *Observations*.

have taken." Clarke then makes the following observations:

For my own part, I cannot help thinking that unless there be a united and vigorous opposition of the English colonies to them, the French are laying a solid foundation for being some time or other, sole masters of this continent; notwithstanding our present superiority to them in point of numbers. But this union is hardly to be expected to be brought about by any confederacy, or voluntary agreement, among ourselves. The jealousies the colonies have of each other, . . . will effectually hinder anything of this kind from taking place. But were every thing else to be got over we should never agree about the form of the union, or who should have the execution of the articles of it. So that however necessary a step this may be, for the mutual safety and preservation of these colonies; it is pretty certain, it will never be taken, unless we are forced to it, by the supreme authority of the nation.¹⁵

Before closing he indicated to Franklin that he would be greatly obliged for any "hints" particularly as to "the nature of the union, that ought to be established amongst his majesty's colonies, on this continent; [and] under what direction the whole English force of this continent might be placed, to answer the design of the union. . . ."¹⁶

Although one is not justified in asserting categorically that Franklin was led to this radical change in his view of steps that should be taken to create an American colonial union, it is likely that Clarke's arguments, cogent as they were, had an effect on his thinking.¹⁷ Doubtless another factor of at least equal importance in determining Franklin's reversal of himself had to do with the attitude of the Pennsylvania Assembly. On April 12 it had agreed to the appointment of John Penn, son of Richard Penn, one of the Pennsylvania Proprietors, Richard Peters, secretary of the

¹⁵ For this letter see Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*, 1st ser., III, 74-6. It is probable that the papers Clarke said he was returning with the May 6 letter were Franklin's estimate of the frontier situation which Clarke had sought in an earlier letter written to Franklin at the suggestion of Governor Shirley on March 18. See H. N. Eavenson, *Map Makers and Indian Traders* (Pittsburgh, 1949), pp. 51, 148-9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ On this point see V. W. Crane, *Benjamin Franklin and a Rising People* (Boston, 1954), pp. 72-3.

province, Isaac Norris, speaker of the Assembly, and Benjamin Franklin, as the Pennsylvania commissioners to the Albany Congress.¹⁸ But on May 18, upon considering the instructions that were to be given to the commissioners, the Assembly took the position "that no Propositions for an Union of the Colonies, . . . can effectually answer the good Purposes, or be binding, farther than they are confirmed by Laws, enacted under the several Government [*sic*] comprised in that Union . . ."¹⁹ Thus any hopes Franklin may have entertained that the Assembly of which he was a member would give the slightest countenance to the type of colonial union he had in mind were now blasted. He also probably reasoned that if his own Assembly would oppose any effective type of union, others would do so—as was later to be the case. The only way therefore to achieve such a goal was to ignore the Assemblies and appeal directly to Parliament, as Clarke had recommended.

It is significant that Clarke had written in his letter to Franklin: "I should be extremely obliged to you for any hints upon . . . the nature of the union that ought to be established amongst his majesty's colonies . . ." and that Franklin entitled his plan "Short Hints toward a Scheme for Uniting the Northern Colonies," as though it were a reply to Clarke's request. While the writer of this article has been unable to prove by any evidence now available that Franklin sent a copy of his "Short Hints" to his correspondent as a reply, it would have been a logical thing to have done, especially as Franklin was manifestly anxious to gain support for the plan throughout the colonies, as is indicated by his circulation of the "Short Hints" among his

¹⁸ *Pennsylvania Archives*, 8th ser., V, 3691, 3695.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, V, 3717. In this connection the student is referred to the excellent article by R. R. Trask, "Pennsylvania and the Albany Congress, 1754," *Pennsylvania History*, XXVII, 273-90. In it Dr. Trask presents not only Governor Hamilton's desire to promote a colonial union for mutual defense but also the hostility of the Assembly to the idea.

friends in New York. Moreover, to have ignored Clarke's request would have been an act of discourtesy to a man of high standing in Boston, closely connected with Governor Shirley. Franklin could hardly have been guilty of such rudeness or lack of acumen. His subsequent friendly and cooperative relations with Clarke at the time of the publication of his treatise on population, mentioned above, would lead one to assume that Clarke did receive a copy of the plan. If such were the case, it is probable that Clarke would have shown it not only to Shirley but also to some one of the commissioners, the appointment of whom he had noted in the postscript of his letter to Franklin.²⁰

Dr. Clarke had many things in common with at least one of the commissioners, Thomas Hutchinson. They were both Harvard graduates, they had the same views on hard money, their later relations with the exiled Acadians showed in each case great sympathy for these unfortunate people dumped upon the shores of Massachusetts Bay; in addition to living as near neighbors on Garden Court Street in the north end of Boston, Clarke's sister had married into the Oliver family, which was closely interrelated with the Hutchinson family. Moreover, whatever may have been the relations of Clarke with Hutchinson, it is clear that there was an intimacy with Shirley who was making every effort to promote a union of the colonies and who therefore may be presumed to have had some hand in framing any such plan evolved in Massachusetts Bay at this time. It is known that the governor was treated by Dr. Clarke, who numbered among his patients members of the most aristocratic families in Boston.²¹

²⁰ Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*, 1st ser., IV, 75. That Franklin had not formulated the main lines of his plan of union before arriving at New York would be inconceivable.

²¹ C. K. Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, VIII, 16, 17-18, 149-50.

Assuming that Franklin did send Clarke a copy of the "Short Hints" and that this in turn was communicated either to Shirley or to Hutchinson, one may also assume that Clarke used the same arguments as he used with Franklin in favor of a plan of union that should be implemented by direct appeal to Parliament. These assumptions would help to clear up a problem that faces the student: the existence of two plans drafted in 1754 for a union of the more northern of the British North American colonies. One is a complete plan and the other, a shorter, incomplete plan.²²

The complete plan would appear to have originated in Massachusetts Bay.²³ It advocated the creation of two unions rather than a "general union" of all the North American colonies, such as Governor Shirley seems to have urged on April 2 in his message to the General Court and that body had endorsed. But only a union of the more northern of the British North American colonies was fully outlined. This plan in its unamended form²⁴ called for a union of the following colonies: Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New York by the following means and under the following terms:

That humble application be made for an Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, by Virtue of which one General Government may be formed, including the said Colonies, within and Notwithstanding which Government, Each of said Colonies shall & may hold and maintain its present Constitution, except the particulars wherein a Change may be directed by said Act, as hereafter Follows. viz.

That the said General Government be administered by one President General, who shall be The Governour of The Province of the Massa-

²² For these plans see the Connecticut Historical Society *Collections*, XVII, 20-2, 25-9. They are to be found in manuscript among the Trumbull Papers, Documents 93 and 94, Connecticut State Library.

²³ See the writer's "The Drafting of the Albany Plan of Union: a Problem in Semantics," *Pennsylvania History*, XXVI, 291-316; see also "Letters to the Editor" by Prof. V. W. Crane and the writer in *ibid.*, XXVII, 126-36.

²⁴ This plan, Document 93 of the Trumbull Papers, was amended in a number of ways as is indicated on the manuscript. See the reproduction of page 1 of the manuscript in *Pennsylvania History*, XXVI, 302.

chusetts Bay for the Time being; and a Grand Council to be chosen by the Representatives of the People of the Said Several Colonies, met in their respective Assemblies.

Thereupon follow the details of the plan including the provision that "The President General be the General or Chief Comander of all The Forces raised by Virtue of This Union, and that it be his office & duty to cause the Acts, rules, and Orders made & concluded by virtue hereof to be carried into Execution. . . ."

The office of President General of the proposed northern union would seem to have been tailor-made for the energetic Governor Shirley, always ambitious for military activity. Indeed, it was he who early in June set off for the Kennebec River at the head of a party of five hundred men "in quest of a French Fort or Settlement said to be erected or made there in the Summer before last . . . and to cause a Fort to be built about 60 miles up the River, and to have an Interview with the Norridgwalk, Penobscot, and Arrassangunticook Indians at Falmouth in Casco Bay. . . ." ²⁵

That the Massachusetts Bay commissioners came to Albany favoring not one general union of all the colonies but "at least two Districts, as the great distance of the two Extream [*sic*] parts of his Majesty's Governments from each other, must render it always very burthensome for some or other of the members to give their attendance," is indicated by their report on October 25 after their return to Boston.²⁶ It seems equally clear that at first they sought a union over which the Governor of Massachusetts Bay would preside,

²⁵ Shirley to the Board of Trade, May 23, 1754, *Correspondence of William Shirley*, II, 69-70. In this letter he indicated he would leave Boston in about seventeen days.

²⁶ Massachusetts Archives, 4:463. Franklin also wrote soon after the end of the Congress in his "Reasons and Motives on Which the [Albany] Plan of Union was Formed" under the heading "Reasons against Partial Union": "It was proposed by some of the commissioners to form the colonies into two or three distinct unions; but for these reasons [six in number] that proposal was dropped even by those that made it . . ." *Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, III, 205.

in view of the complaint of Lieutenant Governor de Lancey, who presided at the Congress, “. . . that Massachusetts acted with an aim to procure the President’s chair for their Governor, and, predicted, as he well might, that it would not be encouraged by New York.”²⁷

This brings one to a major problem in dealing with the evolution of the famous Albany Plan of Union, which as finally formulated at the Congress and agreed upon as a proper one, was submitted to the respective colonial governments for approval. There is no disagreement among scholars on two major points. One of these is that the leading ideas contained in Benjamin Franklin’s “Short Hints” were included in it—except for the proposal to send the plan, once the Congress had acted, directly to England in order to get Parliament’s approval of it. The second is that Franklin was given the chief responsibility at Albany for drafting the plan finally agreed upon and the chief credit should go to him. There is, however, disagreement as to the extent to which Franklin drew upon the work of others in his labors at Albany while engaged in rounding out the plan.²⁸ This disagreement hinges entirely upon one point, viz., whether or not the plan for a limited union of the more northern colonies—as one of the two plans for a limited

²⁷ William Smith, *History of the Late Province of New-York*, II, 183–5 (New York Historical Society Collections, V). Smith’s father was a member of the Governor’s Council and attended the Albany Congress. In the unpublished part of his “Memoirs,” Smith records the fact that his father had told him that de Lancey was disturbed at the Congress when he found that the “Boston men . . . want a President from among them to govern the Provinces,” *Memoirs*, 2:368 (New York Public Library). W. H. W. Sabine, ed., *The Historical Memoirs of William Smith* (New York, 1956) only begin with the year 1763 and end with July 9, 1776. Smith, after occupying the office of Chief Justice of New York, became a loyalist and was made Chief Justice of the Province of Quebec.

²⁸ That Franklin from time to time utilized the ideas of others in his writings is clear. For the dispute over the extent to which Richard Jackson, one of Franklin’s close associates, contributed to the Franklin pamphlet, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered, with regard to her Colonies, and the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadeloupe*. . . that appeared in 1760, see Carl Van Doren, ed., *Letters and Papers of Benjamin Franklin and Richard Jackson, 1753–1785* (Philadelphia, 1947), pp. 10–16, and V. W. Crane, *Benjamin Franklin’s Letters to the Press, 1758–1775* (Chapel Hill, 1950), pp. 16–17.

colonial union that apparently had a Massachusetts Bay origin—came into existence *before* or *after* the Albany Congress.

If it was drafted *after* the Congress, as has been argued, it was manifestly not the work of the Massachusetts Bay commissioners but more likely the work of the committee of the Connecticut Assembly appointed to bring in a report on the Albany Plan of Union. For the surviving manuscript copy of it with emendations is in the handwriting of Jonathan Trumbull, who seems to have acted as the secretary of this post-Congress committee. Thus it would appear as an attempt to provide a substitute for the Albany Plan.²⁹

If it was drafted *before* the Congress it must have served Franklin as the model which he closely followed in drafting the Albany Plan. From the title to the very end the two plans are closely related in phraseology and in structure.³⁰ Only where the Albany Plan—encompassing as it does most of the British North American colonies—deviates from the ideas implicit in a restricted union under the leadership of Massachusetts Bay is there any marked difference. For example, the title of the Albany Plan reads: "Plan of a proposed Union of the several Colonies of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Caroline, for their mutual defence and security, and for extending the British Settlements in North America." The unamended restricted plan reads: "Plan of a Proposed Union of the several Colonies of Massachusetts-Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode-Island, and New

²⁹ For this position, see *Pennsylvania History*, XXVII, 126-9.

³⁰ The reader is referred to the printing in parallel columns in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXIV, 29-35, of the Albany Plan of Union, Franklin's "Short Hints," the "Plan of a proposed Union" (that appears to be the revised form of an earlier Massachusetts Bay plan of union and that was appended to the report of the committee of the Connecticut Assembly on October 2, 1754), and a shorter incomplete plan carrying the same title.

York, for their mutual Defence, & Security, & for extending the British Settlements Northward & Westward of said Colonies in North-America.”

Thomas Hutchinson in 1769, while occupying the responsible offices of Lieutenant Governor and Chief Justice of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, in one of his letters to Governor Bernard in England, informed him of the troubled situation in the colonies, adding:

At the congress at Albany in 1754 I was in favor of an Union of the govts for certain Purposes & I drew the Plan that was then accepted [but] if I had imagined such absurd notions of gov^t could ever have entered the heads of the Americans as are now publicly avowed I should then have been against any sort of union as I was for it.³¹

Later, as a loyalist refugee in England, he also refers to the Albany Plan of Union in the following terms:

The plan for a general union was projected by Benjamin Franklin, Esq., one of the commissioners from the province of Pennsylvania, the heads of which he brought with him.³²

In his *Diary* he likewise has the following comment:

The famous Dr. Franklin was one of the commissioners from Pennsylvania. He with Mr. Hutchinson were the Committee who drew up the plan of Union and representation of the state of the Colonies. The former [the plan of union] was the projection of Dr. F., and prepared in part before he had any consultation with Mr. H., probably brought with him from Philadelphia; the latter [the representation] was the draught of Mr. H.³³

In seeking to reconcile these three statements one must point out that in his *History* all that Hutchinson said was

³¹ Hutchinson to Bernard, October 27, 1769, Massachusetts Archives, 26:395; for a photographic reproduction of this letter see *Pennsylvania History*, XXVI, opposite page 291. In this connection see Malcolm Freiberg, "Thomas Hutchinson: The First Fifty Years (1711-1761)," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., XV, 52, n. In this footnote Dr. Freiberg suggests that what Hutchinson had in mind was the representation to the Board of Trade from the Albany Congress which Hutchinson drew up and which was approved by the commissioners. For the view of the writer of this article that Hutchinson was thinking of the Albany Plan of Union see *Pennsylvania History*, XXVI, 295-7 and *ibid.*, XXVII, 132-6.

³² Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts Bay*, ed. by L. S. Mayo (Cambridge, Mass., 1936, 3 vols.), III, 16.

³³ P. O. Hutchinson, ed., *The Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson* (Boston, 1884; 2 vols.), I, 55.

that "a general union was projected" by Franklin, "the heads of which he brought with him," and in his *Diary* he limits himself to referring to the Albany Plan as "the projection" of Franklin, "prepared in part before he had any consultation with Mr. H., probably brought with him from Philadelphia. . . ." In other words, here was an unfinished plan that Franklin had projected and had prepared in part "before he had any consultation with Mr. H." at the Congress.

What inference did Hutchinson seek to leave by these later statements? Was it that only after "consultation with Mr. H." was Franklin in position to round out his projected union? Or, was it merely a casual observation without any further meaning? If Hutchinson was the person who, before the Congress met, drafted the "Plan of a Proposed Union of the several Colonies of Massachusetts-Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode-Island, and New York, for their mutual Defence, & Security, & for extending the British Settlements Northward & Westward of said Colonies in North-America," these statements are not hard to reconcile, provided one additional assumption is made. It is, that in the course of Hutchinson's "consultation" with Franklin during their work on the committee of the Congress, he turned over to the latter his carefully-framed plan of a limited union, so that Franklin could incorporate into it his own ideas of one general colonial union. If he did so, it was a proper and logical step, since on June 24 the Congress had reached a unanimous decision on the question, "whether a Union of all the Colonies is not at present absolutely necessary for their security and defence."³⁴ For Hutchinson's own plan no longer had any validity after that date, even in his own eyes, as he himself had voted in favor of one general union. The Franklin "Short Hints" were destined

³⁴ *New York Colonial Documents*, VI, 859.

now to evolve into the Albany Plan of Union.³⁵ In final form, if this attempt at historical reconstruction is soundly based, they embodied Franklin's ideas in an earlier and very maturely drafted Massachusetts plan for a partial colonial union.³⁶

While Hutchinson could say in 1769 that "I drew the Plan which was then accepted," the statement can only be true in the sense that he drew the formal plan from which were excised the elements of a partial union. If Franklin could write late in 1754:

For tho' I projected the Plan and drew it, I was oblig'd to alter some Things contrary to my Judgment or should never have been able to carry it through,³⁷

this statement was only true in the sense that he came with the heads of the plan which he had projected and was also responsible for the drafting of the Albany Plan. When he appeared before the Congress on July 10 with his project "in a new form,"³⁸ it was in most respects, if this analysis is correct, in effect the structure created by Hutchinson in his unsuccessful efforts to bring into existence a union of the more northern colonies.

It will be observed that what has been said in the preceding paragraphs of this study has been based on the assumption that the plan for a restricted union of the more northern colonies was in existence *before* the meeting of the

³⁵ On the evolution of the "Short Hints" to its final adoption as the Albany Plan, see *Pennsylvania History*, XXVI, 311-12.

³⁶ For Hutchinson's manifest desire—as a loyalist refugee in England—to disassociate himself at the time of the writing of his *History* and *Diary* from any effort to create a union in America, a union by then in rebellion against the mother country, see *ibid.*, XXVI, 295-7.

³⁷ *Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, III, 243. In his *Autobiography* when referring to the work of the Albany Congress Franklin wrote: "A Committee was then appointed, one member from each colony, to consider the several plans and report. Mine happen'd to be prefer'd, and, with a few Amendments, was accordingly reported," *ibid.*, I, 387.

³⁸ "Mr. Franklin reported the draught in a new form of a plan of a Union . . ." *New York Colonial Documents*, VI, 889.

Albany Congress and was drafted by Thomas Hutchinson. That other plans than the "Short Hints" had been prepared previous to the Congress is clear. Franklin himself stated, as has already been shown, "that several of the Commissioners had form'd plans of the same kind."³⁹ Among the documents published by the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1801 is one that carries the heading, "Plan of a proposed union of the several colonies of Massachusetts-Bay, New-Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode-Island, New-York, and New-Jersey, for their mutual defence and security, and for extending the British settlements northward and westward of said colonies, in North-America; recommended by commissioners from several colonies, met in congress, at Albany, June 14, 1754." The document was designed to accompany the recommendations of the committee of the Connecticut Assembly appointed to report on the Albany Plan of Union. This was done in October, 1754. In its last paragraph, the report, which showed great hostility to this Plan, concludes with the sentence: "All which, with a draught for a union, delivered in herewith, is humbly submitted by, Your Honours' committee."⁴⁰

It should be noted that the chairman of the committee was Lieutenant Governor William Pitkin who headed the Connecticut commissioners at the Albany Congress. Outside of the heading, as printed, is there any clue why this plan of union was submitted with the report since the Albany Plan—and not it—was the subject of attack? Was it not to show that an alternate to the Albany Plan,—all in all a more modest plan—met the initial approval of commissioners of several colonies and that this approval came at a meeting on June 14, the date officially set for the Congress to convene

³⁹ *Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, I, 387.

⁴⁰ For the "Plan" and the "Report of the Committee" of October, 1754, see *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 1st ser., VII, 203-9.

and but five days before it was actually formally opened? This would seem to be the most likely conclusion, otherwise the submission with the report of another plan than that of the Albany Plan without any explanation would be quite meaningless⁴¹ and equally irreconcilable with the known mental capacity of both Pitkin and Trumbull, both future Governors of Connecticut. One seems amply justified, therefore, in the absence of any positive evidence to the contrary, in taking the position that a meeting of certain of the colonial representatives to the Congress took place on June 14 during which, after a plan of union had been submitted and amended, it was "recommended by commissioners of several colonies. . . ."⁴²

⁴¹ In this connection see the "Letter to the Editor" by Professor Crane in *Pennsylvania History*, XXVII, 126-9. In this letter the point is properly emphasized that the editors of the Massachusetts Historical Society were quite ignorant of the Albany Congress and its work when in 1801 they edited Volume VII of the *Collections*. Their only source of information, Professor Crane stresses, was evidently William Livingston's pamphlet, *A Review of the Military Operations in North-America; from . . . 1753 to . . . 1756 (1757)* which they also inserted in this volume of the *Collections*. In it, Livingston wrote (p. 75), that "agreeable to his Majesty's orders, the 14th of June was appointed for a grand congress of commissaries from the several provinces, to be held at Albany;" but he also noted (p. 76) that the "Congress . . . opened on the 18th [actually on the 19th] of June, were ready to treat with the Six Nations. . . ." If the heading of the plan of union did not originate in the committee of the Connecticut Assembly in 1754 but in 1801, the editors, no matter how ignorant of the Albany Congress, would hardly have been so careless as to state that the plan was recommended by the commissioners of several colonies to the Congress when it met on June 14, in view of Livingston's second statement. The problem of the origin of the heading could of course be cleared up without any difficulty if fair copies of the report and the plan of union attached to it could be brought to light. They are, however, missing, as the writer of this article was led to conclude after search for them had taken place in such depositories as the Connecticut State Library, the Connecticut Historical Society, the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Massachusetts Archives.

⁴² That Thomas Hutchinson himself could not have been at the meeting on June 14 is clear since he did not arrive in Albany until after the formal opening of the Congress on June 19. Yet, one may rest assured that other Massachusetts Bay commissioners were on hand with copies of any plan of union they favored on the day set for the opening of the Congress in view of their instructions and the terms of their commissions. Dr. Trask in his article, "Pennsylvania and the Albany Congress," *Pennsylvania History*, XXVII, 279, points out that the Pennsylvania commissioners did not arrive in Albany until June 17. This helps to clear up a point that has concerned the writer of this article. If Franklin had been present at a meeting on June 14, would not he have pressed upon those who attended this informal gathering his own plan of union? At least, would he not have sought to have had Pennsylvania embraced in any projected union—granted that reference was made in the plan considered on that day to a union of colonies to the south which would of course include Pennsylvania?

That the committee of the Connecticut Assembly originated the plan of union subsequently submitted to that body with its report would seem incredible in view of the fact that the plan embodied a feature that Pitkin and the other Connecticut commissioners consistently opposed at the Albany Congress, to wit: "That humble application be made for an act of the Parliament of Great-Britain, by virtue of which one general Union may be formed. . . ." ⁴³ It also contained other features that these sturdy republicans would never have proposed and most certainly would have opposed. Among these were the clauses which provided that the affairs of the union should be administered by "one President General, who shall be the Governor of the province of the Massachusetts-Bay for the time being" and that the "President-General be the general or chief commander of all the forces raised by virtue of this union." It must be borne in mind that Connecticut had waged a long struggle against royal interference in its affairs. The Governor of Massachusetts Bay was a royal appointee and had his royal instructions. Again, one need only recall the bitter and successful opposition of Connecticut to having its armed forces placed under the control of the Earl of Bellamont in 1697 when he was commissioned Governor of Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, and New York, and, in addition, was given control of the militia of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Nor does any supposition that a committee of the Connecticut Assembly drafted this plan—that would have increased Massachusetts Bay's influence in colonial affairs—take into account the sharp difference then existing between the two colonies over the fate of some six towns lying along their disputed borderline.

⁴³ Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*, 1st ser., VII, 203-4. For the opposition of the Connecticut commissioners to applying to Parliament for the creation of a colonial union, see the "Memo Book" of Theodore Atkinson, *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIX, 737. Atkinson was a commissioner from New Hampshire.

But the most decisive argument against ascribing the drafting of this plan for a northern union, with its particular and significant features, to Connecticut leaders is that they had shown not just a lack of desire to make any change in the constitution of the colony but real opposition to it. In addition, they were conservative by nature. They held fast to those institutions and tried ways of life in general that met their immediate needs. Why should any member of the Connecticut Assembly in the fall of 1754 have sought to bring about fundamental changes in the highly prized charter of the colony granted in 1662? Unlike Massachusetts Bay—with its long, exposed border, involving the old Province of Maine—Connecticut, by reason of its location, was considered to be so little interested in, so free of any menace from, the activities of the French and their Indian allies, that it had not even been included in the list of colonies initially invited to attend the Congress. The presence of the Connecticut commissioners was only brought about as the result of the urging of Massachusetts Bay, the Governor and General Court of which were greatly alarmed by the movements of the French which had impelled Shirley in June to lead a force of soldiers into the Maine wilderness.

Upon which colony, Connecticut or Massachusetts Bay, was the pressure greater or the need clearer to break with the past and to think in terms of adopting new and untried political institutions? The answer is obvious.

Another factor of great importance must have militated against the impulse of any Connecticut Assemblyman in 1754 to permit such alterations in the colony's charter as were called for in the plan for a northern union. This was the laying down, at this very period, of a Connecticut claim to the northern portion of Pennsylvania. This claim was based not only upon a sea-to-sea grant of territory by the Crown but also upon the fact that the charter containing the grant

was still in full force, never having been rescinded. It also rested both on a strict construction of the terms of the charter and on the doctrine of the charter's inviolability. On the other hand, the plan for a northern colonial union could only have been conceived by those who took the view that a colonial charter was not inviolable but could be altered by no greater formality than a routine action of Parliament.

How could such popular political leaders as Pitkin and Trumbull have been guilty of deliberately undermining the whole Connecticut position, so clearly outlined with the formation of the Susquehanna Company in 1753 with the purpose of settling northern Pennsylvania? It may be noted in passing that the son of Pitkin was a charter member of this company and that Trumbull himself became a member. That a committee of the Connecticut Assembly composed of such men could have originated this program of a constitution for a new system of government—striking at the binding power of the charter—is quite inconceivable.

Although one must therefore conclude that the plan was not drafted by the committee of the Connecticut Assembly, it was at least copied by Trumbull, as the manuscript in the Connecticut Historical Society clearly shows; it also shows a number of interlineations where changes were made in the copy.⁴⁴ The only explanation for the presence of these interlineations that would appear to make sense, since the evidence points to a Massachusetts Bay origin of the original plan, is that at a meeting on June 14 the original project for a union was submitted and was then amended to meet the desires of other commissioners present. Only after such amendment was it thereupon, as already suggested, "recommended by commissioners from several colonies."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ See again the photographic reproduction of the first page of the manuscript in *Pennsylvania History*, XXVI, 302.

⁴⁵ For the departure of the revised plan from terms characteristically used by Hutchinson see *ibid.*, XXVI, 309-10.

If one were to accept this explanation it would have to be assumed that the Connecticut committee at first decided to submit to the Assembly with its report a copy of the original Massachusetts Bay plan and also another shorter plan based upon it; that thereafter it decided to alter the originals of the two plans so as to incorporate certain changes introduced into them at the meeting on June 14; and, finally, that it determined to submit to the Assembly without recommendation only the revised Massachusetts Bay plan. It should be noted that, as printed in the *Collections* of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the plan includes *all* the changes introduced into the Trumbull manuscript. However, it is clear that the final Albany Plan of Union did not follow the text of the revised version of the plan of union; instead, the unamended version must have been the basis of whatever "consultation" took place between Hutchinson and Franklin at Albany before the latter had given his own plan "a new form" by the morning of July 10.

With the adoption of the Albany Plan of Union by the Congress as the one most proper to submit to the consideration of the colonial governments participating in the Congress, the decision on the fate of the Plan now rested with their respective assemblies.⁴⁶ Upon returning home the Massachusetts Bay commissioners were impelled to indicate in their report why they changed from their preference for a limited union to support a union of all the British North American colonies to the south of Nova Scotia and to the north of Georgia. As the result of their favourable report on the Albany Plan, the Massachusetts Bay Assembly was the only colonial legislature to give the plan sympathetic consideration. Governor Shirley on October 18 addressed

⁴⁶ For the attitude of the various colonial governments toward the Albany Plan see the writer's *The British Empire before the American Revolution*, V, Chap. 5, "The Fate of the Plan of Union."

the two houses of the Assembly, urging that the plan "projected and agreed upon" by the Congress required "the speediest Dispatch, to ripen it for the Consideration of the British Parliament. . . ." ⁴⁷ On the following day a committee of seven was appointed by the House to join with a committee of the Council to consider the Governor's speech ⁴⁸ and on the 22nd, after the minutes of the commissioners at the Congress and the plan of union had been read, a committee of five was appointed by the House to act with a committee of the Council to report on what action should be taken. ⁴⁹ On the 25th appeared the formal report of the commissioners of the colony on the work of the Congress. ⁵⁰

While the Massachusetts Bay joint committee had been proceeding with its work, a letter under date of September 19, addressed to the Speaker of the House by the London agent, William Bollan, had been turned over to it for consideration. The letter reflected the fears of the agent that the Plan would be used by Parliament with "a Design of gaining power over the Colonies." ⁵¹ On December 4 the committee—doubtless under the influence of this warning—reported its apprehensions "that so extensive an Union as is proposed would be attended with such manifest inconveniences as would very much impede if not totally prevent the main design aimed at [by the Albany Plan]." It also recommended that Bollan be instructed "to use his endeavours to prevent any procedure upon it until he shall have further Instructions from this Court." ⁵² The report was read in

⁴⁷ *Massachusetts General Court Records*, 20 (1753-1755):279, and *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1754-1755*, p. 54.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵⁰ *Massachusetts Archives*, 4:459-64.

⁵¹ Bollan to the Speaker, September 19, 1754, *Massachusetts General Court Records*, 21:195-7.

⁵² *Massachusetts Archives*, 6:169.

the Council that same day, after which a decision was reached that the joint committee "be directed forthwith to sit again & consider, & report such Plan of an Union as to them appears most salutary." Moreover, Thomas Hutchinson and Benjamin Lynde were added to the committee.⁵³

The House acted now with great deliberation and it was not until December 6 and after "a very large Debate," that this body agreed to support the action of the Council.⁵⁴ Then on December 11 the joint committee—although the members were apparently divided in their points of view—brought in a plan for a union of the more northern colonies with a recommendation that the London agent be instructed to take proper steps for obtaining an act of Parliament "whereby the union prepared in their plan may be carried into execution."⁵⁵—thereby adopting the point of view of Dr. William Clarke, as expressed in his letter to Franklin of May 6 and also that of Franklin as embodied in his "Short Hints," that no voluntary union of the colonies was possible, that only Parliament could bring it into existence. It was also recommended that the London agent use his best endeavors to see that the more southern North American colonies were brought together in a "Confederacy for the further Defence & Security of his Majesty's Territories on the Continent."⁵⁶

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 6:169 A. After the action of the Council, Hutchinson was appointed to carry a message to the House begging for quick action. See *Journals of the House, 1754-1755*, p. 141.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁵⁵ Massachusetts Archives, 6:171-5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 6:176. It may be added that Shirley who had consistently advocated the idea of a union for mutual defence since the Cape Breton campaign in 1745 appears to have kept this idea paramount in his mind, even beyond the Albany Congress of 1754. For, as he was to state in October 1754, in a letter congratulating Robert Hunter Morris upon entering on his new administration in Pennsylvania: "The Best Advice I can give you is to lose no time for promoting the Plan of an Union of the Colonies for their mutual Defence to be concerted at home, and establish'd by Act of Parliamt, as soon as possible. . . . I am labouring this point, totis viribus" Shirley's *Correspondence*, II, 96.

It is not without significance that the December plan for a limited union of the colonies went back to the design of the plan of union that all evidence indicates was drafted by Hutchinson in the spring, one in which the union would be limited to New England and New York. It is entitled, "A Plan of a propos'd Union of the several Colonies of the Massachusetts-Bay, New-York, New-Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode-Island for their mutual defence and security."⁵⁷ But there were differences in the two plans. The Governor of Massachusetts Bay was not designated for the post of President General, as in the earlier plan; it simply provided that a "President [was] to be appointed and supported by the Crown" and a "Grand Court of the five united Colonies" was to be chosen by "their respective Assemblies." The Grand Court would consist of seven members from Massachusetts Bay, three from New Hampshire, two from Rhode Island, five from Connecticut, and four from New York, making a total of twenty-one members in all, as against the allocation to the Grand Council in the earlier unamended plan, comprehending the same colonies, of seven from Massachusetts Bay, two from New Hampshire, two from Rhode Island, five from Connecticut, and four from New York, making a total of twenty.⁵⁸ In the new plan the responsibilities of the President were more strictly defined and circumscribed than were those of the President General in the earlier plan, but the Grand Court was given greater power to levy on the member colonies of the union—in order to maintain troops, warships, and forts—than had been proposed for the Grand Council in the earlier plan. A final important difference was that the

⁵⁷ For the plan see Massachusetts Archives, 6:177-9.

⁵⁸ See again *Pennsylvania History*, XXVI, 302, for a photograph of the original and the amended allocation of representation on the Grand Council as given in the longer plan for a restricted union, presented among the Trumbull manuscripts in the Connecticut State Library.

new union was not to be permanent but was to terminate in six years unless the hostilities that had begun at the forks of the Ohio between the English and French should still be in progress—an indication that in the eyes of the framers of the project the colonies involved were not ready for a permanent union.⁵⁹

On December 12 the report of the joint committee containing its “proposed Plan” was submitted to the House of Representatives. This brought on a debate that lasted during the ensuing two days. Then the question was put, “Whether the House accept of the General Plan of Union, as Reported by the Commissioners convened at Albany in June last?” This passed in the negative. Thereupon the question was put, “Whether the House accept the Partial Plan of Union reported by the last Committee of both Houses?” This likewise passed in the negative. It was then agreed to take the “Yeas and Nays” of the House whether the proposed union be “general or partial,” except for the colonies of Nova Scotia and Georgia already protected by British arms. On the vote those who favored a general union carried the day with a close vote of forty-one to thirty-seven.⁶⁰

The House thereupon appointed a committee of seven to join with the Council and to report on a plan for a general union. The Council did not agree to act until the 20th; its hesitation perhaps being due to its preference for a partial union. Nevertheless, on the 26th a new general union plan was reported to the House.⁶¹ Unlike the Albany Plan, but

⁵⁹ For a fuller comparison of the two plans of union see the writer's *The British Empire before the American Revolution*, V, 153, n.

⁶⁰ *Journals of the House of Representatives, 1754-1755*, pp. 152-3. There were thirty-two who did not vote, possibly indicating they had not made up their minds. See C. C. Hubbard in the *Commonwealth History of Massachusetts*, ed. by A. B. Hart (New York, 1927-30, 5 vols.), II, 460.

⁶¹ *Journals*, p. 181.

like the recently rejected plan for a partial union, the newest proposed union was to last for only six years, unless the war that had now begun was still continuing. The chief officer, as was true of the partial union plan, should carry the simple title of President. However, the name of the body representing the Assemblies reverted to the title "Grand Council," which indicates a strong preference for it by the drafter of the plan, who was Hutchinson, and would seem to argue that it was he rather than Franklin who first used it in the spring of the year as a fitting name for the Council of the colonies rather than the term "general Council" employed by Franklin in 1751. In contrast to the Albany Plan, no provision was made in the general union plan for the referral of the acts of the President and Grand Council to the Privy Council for approval; nor was anything said about the western boundaries of the colonies, or the purchase of lands from the Indians, or the levying of quit-rents on such lands, or the placing of new western settlements under the control of the union government. Further, regulations covering the Indian trade made by the central government were not to be enforced by its agencies but by those of the individual colonies. There were also provisions that members of the Grand Council should be elected for a period of three years and should hold no court or military office of the central government.⁶²

On December 28 it was moved in the House that consideration of the plan for a general colonial union be suspended until the members were able to consult their constituents. This was carried by a vote of forty-eight to thirty-one. However, that same day when a motion was made in the House that the plan be printed, it failed of passage, once again after "a large debate."⁶³

⁶² For this plan of union see Massachusetts Archives, 6:171-5. This plan is in the handwriting of Hutchinson. It was reproduced with some inaccuracies by Richard Frothingham, *Rise of the Republic* (Boston?, 1872), pp. 613-6.

⁶³ *Journals*, pp. 182 and 184.

This vote was the last attempt on the part of the government of Massachusetts Bay to create a colonial union in 1754. The final act of the General Court came on December 31 when a letter was addressed to the London agent, Bollan, by Josiah Willard, the Secretary of the province, pointing out that the Albany Plan had been "almost unanimously disapproved by both Houses. . . ." One objection to it was the "great sway which the Southern Colonies (the Inhabitants whereof are but little disposed to and less acquainted with affairs of war) would have in all the determinations of the Grand Council etc. But the great and prevailing reason urged against it was, that in its Operation, it would be subversive of the most valuable rights & Liberties of the several Colonies included in it; as a new Civil Government is thereby proposed to be establish'd over them with great & extraordinary power to be exercis'd in time of Peace, as well as war. . . ." ⁶⁴

In reviewing the history of the attempts to establish a colonial union in 1754 one thing is clear: almost every fruitful idea involving a viable proposal came from a native son of Massachusetts Bay either before, during or after the Albany Congress. While Connecticut, with its eyes fixed on the northern part of Pennsylvania, found good reason, both at Albany and at home, for opposing plans of union that might restrain its ambitions, and while New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina either displayed strong opposition to the proposed Albany Plan or simply ignored it without suggesting a substitute, the government of Massachusetts Bay alone valiantly sought some plan that would reconcile particularistic views on the one hand and

⁶⁴ For this letter, see *Commonwealth History of Massachusetts*, II, 461. For the action of the Boston town meeting of January 17, 1755, against not only the Albany Plan of Union but any plan of union that might endanger "the Liberties and Priviledges of the People," see *ibid.*, II, 463 and *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 1st ser., IV, 85.

unionist views on the other. In the end, those who thought in terms of the traditional attitude of the province's relations with other colonial establishments won the day against those who felt that the time had come for the North American colonies to combine for their mutual safety and welfare in the face of hostile activities by the French and their Indian allies.

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