

THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 1775

The congress met according to adjournment.

The committee, to whom the letter from the convention of New York was referred, brought in their report, which being read,

Resolved, That the thanks of this congress be given to the convention of New York, for their vigilance in the case of Capt. Coffin's vessel, and that it be recommended

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to them that the vessel be unloaded, and the cargo safely stored, until all just suspicions, concerning the destination of it, shall be removed.

Ordered, That this be transmitted, by the Pres^t, in a letter to the chairman of the convention of New York.

Agreeable to the order of the day, the Congress resolved itself into a committee of the whole to take into consideration the ways and means of raising money and the state of America; after some time spent therein the president resumed the chair, and Mr. [Samuel] Ward reported, that the committee had come to certain resolutions, which they desired him to report, but not having yet come to a conclusion ordered him to move for leave to sit again.

The report of the committee being read and debated,

Resolved, That a General be appointed to command all the continental forces, raised, or to be raised, for the defence of American liberty.

That five hundred dollars, per month, be allowed for his pay and expences.

The Congress then proceeded to the choice of a general, ||by ballot,|| when George Washington, Esq. was unanimously elected.¹

Resolved, that the Congress will to Morrow again resolve itself into a committee of the whole to take into consideration the state of America.

Adjourned till to Morrow ||at eight o'clock.||

The congress met according to adjournment.

The president from the chair informed Geo: Wash-

¹These resolutions were printed in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 11 December, 1775. Washington was nominated by Thomas Johnson of Maryland, and the election was unanimous. The attitude of the Congress and the causes leading to this choice are fully described in the Diary and later correspondence of John Adams.

ington Esq^r. that he had the order of the Congress to acq[ain]t him, that the Congress had by a unanimous vote made choice of him to be general and com[mander] in chief to take the supreme command of the forces raised and to be raised, in defence of American Liberty, and desired his acceptance of it. Whereupon Colonel Washington, standing in his place, spoke as follows:

“MR. PRESIDENT,

“Tho’ I am truly sensible of the high Honour done me, in this Appointment, yet I feel great distress, from a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important Trust: However, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty, and exert every power I possess in their service, and for support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation.

“But, lest some unlucky event should happen, unfavourable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered, by every Gentleman in the room, that I, this day, declare with the utmost sincerity, I do not think myself equal to the Command I am honored with.

“As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress, that, as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to have accepted this arduous employment, at the expence of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact Account of my expences. Those, I doubt not, they will discharge, and that is all I desire.”¹

Upon motion *Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed to draught a commission and instructions for the general.

¹This reply, in the writing of Edmund Pendleton, with a single line added by Washington, is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 152, vol. I, folio 1.

The committee, to consist of the following Mr. [Richard Henry] Lee, Mr. E[dward] Rutledge, and J[ohn] Adams.

Upon motion *Resolved una*: That a committee of 5 be appointed to take into consideration the papers transmitted from the convention of New York relative to Indian affairs, and report what steps, in their opinion, are necessary to be taken for securing and preserving the friendship of the Indian Nations.

That the committee consist of the following persons, viz, Mr. [Philip] Schuyler, Mr. [Patrick] Henry, Mr. [James] Duane, Mr. [James] Wilson, and Mr. P[hilip] Livingston.

Agreeable to the order of the day the Congress resolved itself into a committee of the whole to take into consideration the state of America. And after some time spent therein the president resumed the chair and M^r. [Samuel] Ward reported that the committee had come to certain resolutions, which they had ordered him to report but not having come to a conclusion they desired him to move for leave to sit again.

The resolves of the committee being read, the Congress came to the following Resolutions:—

Resolved, That two¹ major generals be appointed for the American army.

That the pay of each of the Major generals be one hundred and sixty-six dollars per month.

That when any of these act in a separate department, he be allowed, for his pay and expence, three hundred and thirty-two dollars per month.

That there be eight² Brigadiers general. That the pay of each be one hundred and twenty-five dollars per month.

¹ In the ms. the original record stood for *three*; this was changed to *four*, and finally to *two*.

² The original record called for *five*.

That there be one adjutant General, and his pay one hundred and twenty-five dollars per month.

That there be one Commissary general of stores and provisions, and that his pay be eighty dollars per month.

That there be one quarter master general for the grand army, and a deputy, under him, for the separate army. That the pay of the quarter master general be eighty dollars per month, and that of the deputy forty dollars per month.

That there be a pay master general, and a deputy under him, for the army in a separate department; that the pay, for himself, be one hundred dollars per month, and for the deputy pay master, under him, fifty dollars per month.

That there be one chief engineer at the grand army, and that his pay be sixty dollars per month.

That two Assistants be employed under him; that the pay of each of them be twenty dollars per month.

That there be a chief Engineer for the army, in a separate department, and two assistants under him; that the pay of the chief engineer be sixty dollars per month, and the pay of the assistants each, twenty dollars per month.

That there be three aid de camps and that their pay be thirty-three dollars per month each.

That there be a secretary to the general; and his pay sixty-six dollars per month.

That there be a secretary to the Major general, acting in a separate department; and that his pay be thirty-three dollars per month.

That there be a commissary of the musters, and that his pay forty¹ dollars per month.²

¹ Originally *twenty dollars*.

² The resolutions passed this day were printed in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 11 December, 1775.

John Adams thus commented on the pay: "The pay which has been voted to

A Letter from the Convention of New York, rec^d by express, was laid before the Congress and read, which being taken into consideration,

Resolved, That the provincial convention of New York, be desired immediately to apply to Governor Trumbull to order the Connecticut troops, now stationed at Greenwich, Stamford, and parts adjacent, to march towards New York, and that part of them occupy such posts upon that Island as the s^d provincial Convention shall judge best adapted to prevent the communication between the town and country from being cut off, the remainder of the troops to be employed in securing the navigation of Hudson's river by erecting Batteries at such places as the s^d Convention shall judge most proper to answer that purpose.

Resolved, that this Congress will to Morrow again resolve itself into a committee of the whole to take into their further consideration the state of America.

Adjourned till to Morrow at 9 o'Clock.

all the officers, which the Continental Congress intends to choose, is so large, that I fear our people will think it extravagant and be uneasy. Mr. Adams, Mr. Paine, and myself, used our utmost endeavors to reduce it, but in vain.

"Those ideas of equality, which are so agreeable to us natives of New England, are very disagreeable to many gentlemen in the other colonies. They had a great opinion of the high importance of a continental general, and were determined to place him in an elevated point of light. They think the Massachusetts establishment too high for the privates, and too low for the officers, and they would have their own way." *John Adams to Elbridge Gerry*, 18 June, 1775. Works, IX, 358. See also his letter to Joseph Hawley of November 25, in the same volume.

SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 1775

The Congress met according to adjournment.

The committee appointed to draught a commission to the general, reported the same, which, being read by paragraphs and debated, was agreed to and is as follows:

IN CONGRESS

The delegates of the United Colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Counties of New-Castle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina: To George Washington, Esq.

WE, reposing special trust and confidence in your patriotism, valor, conduct, and fidelity, do, by these presents, constitute and appoint you to be General and Commander in chief, of the army of the United Colonies, and of all the forces now raised, or to be raised, by them, and of all others who shall voluntarily offer their service, and join the said Army for the Defence of American liberty, and for repelling every hostile invasion thereof: And you are hereby vested with full power and authority to act as you shall think for the good and welfare of the service.

And we do hereby strictly charge and require all Officers and Soldiers, under your command, to be obedient to your orders, and diligent in the exercise of their several duties.

And we do also enjoin and require you, to be careful in executing the great trust reposed in you, by causing strict discipline and order to be observed in the army, and that the soldiers be duly exercised, and provided with all convenient necessaries.

And you are to regulate your conduct in every respect by the rules and discipline of war, (as herewith given you,) and punctually to observe and follow such orders and directions, from time to time, as you shall receive from this, or a future Congress of these United Colonies, or committee of Congress.

This commission to continue in force, until revoked by this, or a future Congress.

By order of the Congress.¹

Dated, Philad^a June 17, 1775.

¹The original is in the Library of Congress. It was printed in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 11 December, 1775, together with the Congress pledge and list of officers of

Ordered, ||That the same be fairly transcribed,|| to be signed by the president, and attested by the secretary, and delivered to the General.

Resolved unanimously upon the question, Whereas, the delegates of all the colonies, from Nova-Scotia to Georgia, in Congress assembled, have unanimously chosen George Washington, Esq. to be General and commander in chief, of such forces as are, or shall be, raised for the maintenance and preservation of American liberty; this Congress doth now declare, that they will maintain and assist him, and adhere to him, the said George Washington, Esq^r, with their lives and fortunes in the same cause.

The Congress then proceeded to the choice of the Officers in the army by ballot: when

Artemus Ward, Esq. was chosen first major-general ~~and second in command~~.

Horatio Gates, Esq. was ~~unanimously chosen~~ adjutant general.

Resolved, That Horatio Gates, now chosen adjutant general, shall have the rank of a Brigadier general.

Charles Lee, Esq. was ~~unanimously chosen~~ second Major general ~~to be third in command~~.

Resolved, that this congress will on Monday resolve itself into a committee of the whole to take into consideration the state of America.

Adjourned till Monday next at 9 o'Clock.