

In the Council of forty-eight a quorum was to consist of twenty-five among whom there must be one or more from a majority of the colonies. This quorum was very large, but necessarily so, for any lesser number might have resulted in one portion of the union dominating over the remainder, a most disastrous situation and one which had to be avoided at any cost. Their laws were to be transmitted to the King-in-Council for approbation as soon as possible after their passage. If not disapproved after three years they would remain in force. The above clause preserved the connection with the Crown direct. Benjamin Franklin was greatly in favour of maintaining and strengthening this bond. In a discussion on this sentence he remarked that it was inserted to preserve the connection of the members with the head of the British Empire.

The plan of union closes with the following emergency instructions: "Any colony may defend itself, and lay the burden of the expense before the President-General and Grand Council, who may allow the payment of the same as far as they judge such account just and reasonable" this encouraged self-defence, while discountenancing lavish expenditure on small or unnecessary private quarrels." (17)

Before drawing up the above plan of union which had been accepted practically without alteration by the Albany commissioners, Benjamin Franklin had discussed it with his friends, and, a few weeks before the Congress met, sent it to James Alexander, deputy secretary of the province of New York, and at one time a member of the New York House, accused later of treason but honourably acquitted. (18) He forwarded it to Cadwallader Colden, President of the Council of New York, and afterwards Lieutenant Governor, (19) with a letter from which is extracted the following "Some difficulties remain. For example there can not be found men enough tolerably well skilled in warlike affairs, to be chosen for the Grand Council; and there is danger in communicating to them the schemes to be put into execution, for fear of discovery to the enemy. This may be, . . . remedied by a Council of State of a few persons . . . chosen by the Grand Council to be always attending the President-General . . . and digest before hand all matters . . . and lay before the Grand Council . . . only the general plan of oper-

(17) New York Col. Docs, Franklin's Works and contemporary sources.

(18) N. Y. Col. Docs, Vol. V.

(19) *Ibid.*, Vols. V, VI, VII.