July 21. 1775

Agreeably to Order the Congress resolved itself into a Committee of the whole to take into Consideration the State of America, when Doct B. Franklin submitted to their Consideration the following

"Sketch of Articles of Confederation

Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union proposed by the delegates of the several Colonies of New Hampshire &c. in general Congress met at Philadelphia May the 10th 1775.

Art. I.

The Name of this Confederacy shall henceforth be The United Colonies of North America

Art. II.

The said United Colonies, hereby severally enter into a firm League of Friendship with each other binding on themselves, and their posterity for their common defence against their Enemies, for the security of their Liberties and Properties, the safety of their persons and Families, and their mutual and General Welfare.

Art. III

That each Colony shall enjoy and retain as much as it may think fit of its own present Laws, Customs, Rights, Privileges, and

and peculiar Jurisdictions within its own limits, and may amend its own Constitution as shall seem best to its own Assembly or Convention.

Art. IV

That for the more convenient Management of general Interests, Delegates shall be annually elected in each Colony to meet in general Congress at such time and Place as shall be agreed on in the next preceding Congress. Only where particular circumstances do not make a duration necessary, it is understood to be a rule, that each succeeding Congress be held in a different Colony till the whole number be gone through, and so in perpetual Rotation; and that accordingly the next Congress after the present shall be held at Annapolis in Maryland.

Art. V.

That the power and duty of the Congress shall extend to the determining on War and Peace, the sending and receiving Ambassadors and entering into Alliances (The reconciliation with Great Britain), the settling all disputes and differences between Colony and Colony, about limits or any other cause, if such should arise, and the planting of New Colonies when proper. The Congress shall also make such general Ordinances as tho' necessary to the General Welfare, particular Assemblies cannot be competent to, Viz those that may relate to our general Commerce, or general Currency, the establishment of posts, and the Regulation of our Common forces. The Congress shall also have the appointment of all General Officers civil and Military, appertaining to the general Confederacy, such as general Treasurer, Secretary, &c.

Art. VI

All charges of wars, and all other general expences to be incurred for the common welfare, shall be defrayed out of a common Treasury which is to be supplied by each Colony in proportion to its number of Male polls between sixteen and sixty years of age; the taxes for paying that proportion are to be laid and levied by the laws of each Colony.

Art. VII.

The Number of Delegates to be elected and sent to Congress by each Colony shall be regulated from time to time by the number of such polls returned, so as that one delegate be allowed for every five thousand Polls. And the delegates are bring with them to every Congress an authenticated Return of the number of Polls in the respective Provinces which is to be taken triennially, for the purposes above mentioned.

Art. VIII.

At every meeting of the Congress, one half of the members returned exclusive of proxies be necessary to make a Quorum, and each Delegate at the Congress shall have a Vote in all cases, and if necessarily absent shall be allowed to appoint any other delegate from the same Colony to be his Proxy who may Vote for him.

Art. IX.

An Executive Council shall be appointed by the Congress out of their own body consisting of twelve persons; of whom in the first Appointment one third (viz (four) shall be for one year, (four) for two years, and (four) for three years; and as the said terms expire the Vacancies shall be filled by appointments for three years, whereby one third of the members will be changed annually. This Council of whom two thirds shall be a quorum in the recess of Congress

is to execute what shall have been enjoined thereby; to manage the general Continental Business and Interest, to receive applications from foreign Countries, to prepare matters for the consideration of the Congress, to fill up (pro tempore) Continental Offices that fall vacant, and to draw on the General Treasurer for such monies as may be necessary for general services, and appropriated by the Congress to such services.

Art. X.

No Colony shall engage in an Offensive War with any Nation of Indians without the consent of the Congress or grand Council above mentioned, who are first to consider the Justice and Necessity of such War.

Art. XI.

A perpetual Alliance offensive and defensive is to be entered into as soon as may be with the six Nations; their Limits to be ascertained and secured to them; their land not to be encroached on, nor any private, or Colony purchases made of them hereafter to be held good, nor any contract for lands to be made, but between the great Council of the Indians at Onandaga and the General Congress. The Boundaries and lands of all the other Indians shall also be ascertained and secured to them in the same manner, and persons appointed to reside among them in proper districts, and shall take care to prevent Injustice in the trade with them, and be enabled at our general expence by occasional small supplies to relieve their personal wants and distresses. And all purchases from them shall be by the Congress for the general advantage and benefit of the United Colonies.

Art XII

As all new Institutions may have Imperfections which only time and experience can discover, it is agreed that the General Congress from time to time shall propose such amendements of this Constitution as may be found necessary, which being approved by a majority of the Colony Assemblies, shall be equally binding with the rest of the articles of this Confederation.

Art. XIII.

Any and every Colony from Great Britain upon the Continent of North America not at present engaged in our Association, may upon application and joining the said Association be received into this Confederation Viz Ireland, the West India Islands, Quebec, St Johns, Nova Scotia, Bermudas, and the East and West Floridas and shall thereupon be entitled to all the advantages of our Union, mutual assistance and Commerce.

These Articles shall be proposed to the several Provincial Conventions or Assemblies to be by them considered, and if approved they are advised to empower their delegates to agree to, and ratify the same in the enuing Congress. After which the Union thereby established is to continue firm till the terms of Reconciliation proposed in the Petition of the last Congress to the King are agreed to, till the Acts lately made restraining the American Commerce and Fisheries are repealed, till Reparation is made for the injury done to Boston by shutting up its port, for the Burning of Charlestown, and for the expence of this unjust War; and till all the British Troops are withdrawn from America. On the Arrival of these events the Colonies will return to their former Connection and Friendship with Britain: But on failure thereof this Confederation is to be perpetual.

June 10th 1776

Agreeable to Order the Congress Resolved itself into a Committee of the whole to take into their farther consideration the Resolutions to them referred and after some time spent thereon the President resumed the Chair and Mr Harrison reported that the Committee have had under consideration the Resolutions to them referred, and have come to a Resolution which he read

The Congress took into consideration the Report from the Committee of the whole whereupon — Resolved That the consideration of the first resolution be postponed to this day three weeks, and in the meanwhile that no time be lost in case the Congress agree thereto, that a Committee be appointed to prepare a declaration to the effect of the said first Resolution, which is in these words

"That these United Colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent States; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved. ——

June 11th 1776. ——

Resolved That a Committee be appointed to prepare and digest the form of a Confederation to be entered into between these Colonies

June 12th 1776. ——

Resolved that the Committee to prepare and digest the form of a Confederation to be entered into between these Colonies consist of a member from each Colony. ——

New Hampshire ..... Mr Bartlett ——
Massachusetts ..... Mr S Adams ——
Rhode Island ..... Mr Hopkins ——
Connecticut ..... Mr Sherman ——
New York ..... Mr R Livingston ——