

Jeremy Belknap: Notes of Convention Debates, 19 January 1788

...Gerry informed <the> President <that> he was stating a Number of facts respecting <the> Senate (he had been writing at <the> table for some time)—Dana—adverted to <the> Transaction of yesterday & moved <that> if G was preparing any thing it was proper <that> a Q[uestio]n sh[oul]d <be> proposed to him *in writing*. G attempted to speak—Parsons insisted on his right <as> a Member to be heard—a long altercation ensued about G's attendance—his right to state facts & give reasons & <the> Time for adjournmt came without his having oppo[rtunity] to give in what he intended tho' a Q[uestio]n was reduced to writing by Wedgery—to this purpose—“<that> Mr G be desired to *give Information* respecting <the> Senate”.

Remarks—

It appeared to me <that> Gerry was premature in *offering* his statement before he was called upon—<that> Dana was right in moving for a *written* Question & I suppose had not many other members interposed their Opinions <the> matter might <have> gone on but as they also insisted to be heard <the> matter was protracted till 1 a clock—G certainly was <the> first yesterday to insist on having a Q[uestio]n *in writing*—he then acquiesced in <the> determina[tio]n to give his answer so—as he had now been preparing a *written statement* he ought to have either waited till a Q[uestio]n was proposed—or to <have> privately procured somebody to put <the> Q[uestio]n—his *offering* it was premature & irregular.

after <the> adjournmt & before they got out of <the> Ho[use] Gerry & Dana had some *pretty high words*—on <the> affair—

It is my Opinion <that> if G had any regard to his own personal Dignity he <would> not sit there to be moved as a Machine only by <the> pull of *both* parties.—

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