

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On the Drafting of the Albany Plan of Union

Nov. 16, 1959

To the Editor:

In his article in the October number Professor Gipson has argued at some length that a phrase appended to the caption of the plan of partial union printed in the Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*, first series, VII (1801), 203, asserting that this plan was "recommended by commissioners from several colonies, met in congress, at Albany, June 14, 1754," confirms his well-known hypothesis that the plan in question, from Trumbull Papers, Connecticut State Library, I, 93, preserves the so-called Hutchinson plan of union—which in his view contributed the form and phrasing but none of the basic principles of the Albany Congress Plan. From this phrase he has drawn a circumstantial deduction: that on June 14, five days before the Congress convened and about a week before Hutchinson reached Albany, a meeting was held of such commissioners as had already arrived in which the Hutchinson plan was considered, modified, and recommended to the Congress. As for the corrections and interlineations in the Trumbull drafts (I, 93, 94), all in the handwriting of Jonathan Trumbull, a Connecticut assemblyman who was not one of the commissioners at Albany, he speculates that they were attempts by Trumbull, on information from someone else, to incorporate in a copy of the original Hutchinson text the alterations made on June 14.

Repeatedly Professor Gipson asserts confidence in the integrity of the description of the document by the Boston editors, Abiel Holmes and Jedidiah Morse—this has become, indeed, a vital point in his argument—as on p. 305, n. 23, where he also censures Albert C. Bates, who furnished a more accurate text in the Connecticut Historical Society *Collections*, XVII (1918), 20-25, for allegedly "failing to print the preamble . . . thus leaving out data of the utmost importance that clarifies the place this limited plan of union occupies in the evolution of the Albany Plan.¹ Actually, however, Bates did print the caption; he only omitted, for the best of reasons, the final phrase in the 1801 text, "recommended by commissioners from several colonies, met in congress, at Albany, June 14, 1754." Unfortunately for the whole complex argument this key phrase does not appear in the manuscript from which the texts both of 1801 and 1918 were drawn. It was not part of the preamble of the plan drafted by the Connecticut assembly committee in October, 1754. Consequently there is no basis for asserting (p. 304) that

¹ On p. 307, n. 28, Professor Gipson again attributes to Bates an endorsement of Hutchinson's authorship of a plan considered at Albany. I have shown elsewhere that the passage quoted was written by Forrest Morgan; Bates, while referring to the tradition, did not endorse it.

the "fact that the chairman of the committee . . . was also the leader of the delegation from his colony to the Congress lends great weight to the accuracy of the wording of the preamble of the plan as given above. . . ." It was, instead, a late editorial interpolation, intended to be read in quite another sense from that which Professor Gipson has understood. When Holmes and Morse tampered with the caption in 1801 they were merely attempting to identify the plan, erroneously to be sure, as the veritable Albany Congress Plan of Union.

As I pointed out, too briefly it appears, in my letter to the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXV (July, 1951), 350-353, the story of how they betrayed themselves into this extraordinary error, and into others in consequence, can still be read in the working notes, several of them initialled "A. H." and "J. M.," jotted down on the last folios of both Trumbull manuscript drafts (I, 93 f., 94 d.). Some of them Bates printed; he regarded them as later additions but failed to recognize that they were editorial memoranda. In this volume the editors had decided to reprint William Livingston's pamphlet, *A Review of the Military Operations in North-America; from . . . 1753 to . . . 1756* (1757). Its brief passage on the Albany Congress was evidently their only source of information on the topic; from it they drew both the controversial phrase in the caption and an unprinted memorandum which proves that they made the error of identification which I am attributing to them. Printing of the pamphlet probably suggested inclusion also of the Albany Plan. Unhappily, they failed to discover an authentic text. However, in the Trumbull manuscripts, then in the Society's keeping, they turned up two variant texts of a plan of sectional union which superficially resembled what they so vaguely understood of the project. The pamphlet made only a brief reference to the content of the plan, though one phrase which they overlooked, referring to "a general union of the British colonies," should have warned them that they were on the wrong track.

Which of the two manuscripts to use? Both were at first labeled "App." (i.e., approved for printing) by "A. H." and "J. M.," and the longer draft (I, 93) docketed "Plan of Union approved N. 1." The shorter draft, so obviously an incomplete preliminary sketch, was set aside and the preferred manuscript labeled "Part of the Contents of Vol for 1800," which leaves no possible doubt of the source of their text and hence of so much of the caption as is authentic.² Further notes on I, 93 f., include a full list of the commissioners and New York councillors in attendance. Demonstrably it was copied from the pamphlet (compare *Collections*, VII, 76 and 203) and

² On p. 309, lines 5-8, Professor Gipson suggests that a fair copy of the plan as revised accompanied the report of the Connecticut committee, a reasonable supposition. But he also asserts that it included "a list of all the delegates at the congress," for which there is no evidence except the inclusion of such a list by the Boston editors. As I explain below, they drew this list from the Livingston pamphlet. He seems to be inferring that Holmes and Morse had in their hands the fair copy, now lost. There is no evidence that it was ever part of the Trumbull collection in their possession; and there is decisive evidence in their notes on I, 93, that the latter was the copy that they used.

not from some other contemporary source. They headed the list "Present," and inserted it between the altered caption and the text copied from I, 93, a clear indication that they were treating the document not, as Professor Gipson contends, as the proposal of a rump of the delegates, but as the end-product of the Albany Congress deliberations. The two memoranda that follow were not printed and hence struck out; they furnish decisive evidence to this effect.³ The first reads: "The within plan acceded to by every Member but Mr. De Lancey." Just so Livingston had described the Congress action on the official plan, "approved at the time," he wrote, "by every member of the congress, except Mr. De Lancey." The final memorandum, however, reveals some lingering perplexity: "Query, Why were not Pensilvania & Maryland included in the within plan, it has been the received opinion that Mr Franklin was the author of it?"

Committed as they were to an impossible identification of the document, is it any wonder that these editors in their confusion gave it a description that has misled scholars? Their general heading was "Union of the British American Colonies, as proposed in the year 1754"—in a common sense reading, proposed by the Congress to the assemblies. The doubt reflected in the query just quoted they attempted to resolve in a footnote that compounded their original error: "There was another plan proposed, which embraced all the colonies of North America, except Georgia and Nova Scotia." Franklin's continental plan, adopted at Albany, was thus relegated to limbo! In extricating themselves from their dilemma they had perpetrated two errors, and were implying that the Congress had been offered a choice between two rival plans—the first hint of what has proved to be a persistent fallacy. They completed the confusion by adding gratuitously to the authentic caption of the plan of partial union the phrase upon which Professor Gipson has rested his latest argument. In proper context no such special significance as he has read into it attaches either to the date, June 14, or to the reference to the recommendation by commissioners "from several colonies." The interpolation was simply a condensed paraphrase of the sentence in their pamphlet source introducing the topic of the Congress (*ibid.*, 75): "Accordingly, agreeable to his Majesty's orders, the 14th of June was appointed for a grand congress of commissioners from the several provinces, to be held at Albany, . . .," etc.

By 1805 Abiel Holmes was no longer ignorant of the true character and content of the Albany Plan. In his *American Annals*, II, 201, he included an accurate summary but kept alive another misconception that he had helped to create by referring readers to Vol. VII of the *Collections* for "Another plan, then proposed." It is a matter of curious interest that his revised version of the theory of two plans—the one that Professor Gipson has

³ So too does the caption they supplied for the document they printed immediately after the text of the supposed Albany Plan: "Report of a Committee, chosen by the General Assembly of Connecticut, respecting the foregoing Plan of Union." Assuming as he does that the Boston editors knew the true character of "the foregoing Plan of Union," Professor Gipson urges that the text of the plan should have *followed* this report. The difficulty disappears when it is realized that their "major blunder" was of another character: identifying the plan as the actual Congress proposal.

adopted—exactly reversed the earlier version in respect to the status in the Albany proceedings of Franklin's plan and the purported second plan. In neither version has this theory any other basis than the muddled speculations of inept editors. Holmes was still guessing in 1805 when he added the final element to the myth linking the Connecticut draft of a substitute plan to the Albany Congress. "Who composed it," he wrote, "does not appear; perhaps Mr. Hutchinson of Massachusetts."

Again, as in 1951, I have found it necessary to reject an essential support for Professor Gipson's argument that a supposititious Hutchinson Plan was one of the sources of the Albany Plan. In this article he has modified his stand on the former issue of our debate, the character of the Trumbull manuscripts, in detail only. In this impasse I can only refer scholars to the evidence I then presented, trusting that they will examine it more carefully and objectively than Professor Gipson has done. I am more hopeful that he will accept my present demonstration of the unreliability of the 1801 printing of the caption of the so-called "New England Plan" in view of the fact that he has himself offered readers visual evidence of the fatal discrepancy between the manuscript text of the caption and the Boston editors' text: compare the facsimile, p. 302, with the quotation, p. 303. (On the latter page the spurious phrase—with the rest of the caption—has been given a factitious eighteenth-century air by the substitution of the obsolete mode of capitalization, which has no warrant in the source cited.)

In the interest of brevity I have confined my critique to just these two questions of documentation upon which the thesis stands or falls. Much could be said to the same purpose upon the peripheral issues. Unfortunately, in so technical a discussion the implications of the thesis may be lost to view. To what conclusions do Professor Gipson's assumptions lead? That Thomas Hutchinson, author of the "Representation" of 1754, fathered a weak-government, quasi-republican plan for a union largely administrative in character, and contrary to the instructions of his assembly, a sectional plan. And to the even stranger conclusion that the official draftsman of the Congress, Benjamin Franklin, who surely had no reason to doubt his own competence as a penman, incorporated in the final plan basic principles that he had been promoting since 1751 but whimsically embodied them in the form and language of someone else's rejected project.

University of Michigan

VERNER W. CRANE

Nov. 30, 1959

To the Editor:

The "Letter" that Professor Verner Crane has written to PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY and to which this is an answer represents a continuation of the discussion between us that took place in the July 1951 issue of *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* over certain tentative conclusions I had reached in my article on "Thomas Hutchinson and the Framing of the Albany Plan of Union, 1754," in the January, 1950, number of that quarterly. The occasion of Professor Crane's present letter is my article in the last number of PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY, entitled, "The Drafting of the Albany Plan of Union: A Problem in Semantics."

In so far as discussions between historians on difficult points relating to the past tend to illuminate it, these have a value and are therefore desirable. I myself welcome Professor Crane's thoughtful and courteous comments and the opportunity to reply to them. It is clear that many of the essential facts respecting the origin of the Albany Plan of Union still elude us—we still have to do a lot of groping in the dark. At best, all that can be safely done, in view of the lack of data on certain points, is to set forth tentative hypotheses that in the future may or may not be sustained when, perchance, more pertinent information is uncovered.

Stated very simply, the chief points of difference between Professor Crane and myself revolve around two questions: first, when did the two plans of union of the more northern continental colonies (in the handwriting of Jonathan Trumbull and to be found in the Connecticut State Library) come into existence? Second, what part did Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts Bay play in the framing of the Albany Plan of Union?

Let us now take up for analysis Professor Crane's position on the first question. To him the two plans of union referred to above were not only drafted by Connecticut men, but were framed *after* the Albany Congress of 1754 had terminated. With reference to the longer one of the two, called the "New England Plan" (the plan submitted by a committee of the Connecticut Assembly to that body without recommendations when reporting on the Albany Plan of Union) he has the following to say at the end of his "Letter to the Editor" written in 1951, which we are led to infer is still his present point of view: "The 'New England Plan,' as Hoadly determined [*Public Records of Connecticut* (1877), X, 293], was a later proposed Connecticut substitute, not an Albany Congress document. It reflected the fears and hesitations of that self-conscious, particularistic, republican colony, not the program of the Massachusetts delegation at Albany and surely not the statesmanship of Thomas Hutchinson" (*The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXV [July, 1951], 353).

My first comment is that I do not believe that Charles J. Hoadly, or any other person living at the time he edited in 1877 Volume X of the *Records of the Colony of Connecticut* was in possession of adequate information to "determine" whether or not "The New England Plan" was of Connecticut origin. Again, I cannot accept Professor Crane's view that this plan "reflected the fears and hesitations of that self-conscious, particularistic republican colony. . . ." Far from it.

Although it is true that one of the things the Connecticut commissioners to the Albany Congress did not like about the Albany Plan of Union was its territorial sweep, they disliked equally, we are led to believe, the idea embodied in the Plan of making application to *Parliament* to bring into existence the proposed union. At least, on each occasion when this proposal came up before the Congress, they refused to support it. (See Theodore Atkinson's "Memo Book," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIX [1953], 737.) Yet this feature is embodied in the "New England Plan" as a basic feature. The fact that it is should warn one that it is very unlikely Lieutenant Governor Pitkin (who led the delegation to the Albany Congress and who upon his return became chairman of the committee of the Assembly

to report on the Albany Plan of Union) would sponsor or help draw up a plan for the consideration of the Connecticut Assembly embodying such a proposal.

What is equally remarkable and arouses even greater suspicion of the likelihood that the "New England Plan" could have originated with a group of leading Connecticut men either before or after the Albany Congress is that it would impel one to believe that they were much more interested in enhancing the power of the Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay than were the people of the latter colony. In other words, we are asked to believe that leaders in the political life of Connecticut, rather than his Massachusetts Bay supporters and admirers, conceived the idea of making Governor William Shirley President General of a northern continental union, with command of the union troops and with other powers conferred by the King under the Great Seal, as implied in the "New England Plan," with the offices of President General of the Union and Governor of Massachusetts Bay combined "for the Time being. . . ."

A further problem appears. What could have motivated any person in a position of public responsibility in Connecticut in 1754 to have sought to make the already powerful government of Massachusetts Bay still more powerful, especially in light of the bitter issue between the two colonies over their common boundary and the fate of half a dozen flourishing towns? I myself cannot accept the idea that any group of Connecticut men would have proposed this. Clearly it would have brought an extension of the power of Parliament and of the prerogative of the King over the lives of the people of Connecticut. Professor Crane refers to "the fears and hesitations of that self-conscious, particularistic, republican colony. . . ." He is certainly correct about "the fears and hesitations." These they had, particularly for the preservation of their prized charter, which the adoption of the "New England Plan" would have breached in more ways than one. Obviously this plan did not accord with their thinking but (despite Professor Crane's view to the contrary) was, I am persuaded, in perfect accord with the statesmanship of Thomas Hutchinson as a prerogative man.

This now leads to the second matter at issue between Professor Crane and myself: the part Hutchinson had in the framing of the Albany Plan of Union. Referring to the assumptions that underlie my position, in the last paragraph of his present letter Professor Crane has this comment: "To what conclusions do his assumptions lead? That Thomas Hutchinson, author of the 'Representation' of 1754, fathered a weak-government, quasi-republican plan for a union largely administrative in character, and contrary to the instructions of his assembly, a sectional plan. And to the even stranger conclusion that the official draftsman of the Congress, Benjamin Franklin, who had no reason to doubt his own competence as a penman, incorporated in the final plan basic principles that he had been promoting since 1751 but whimsically embodied them in the form and language of someone else's rejected project."

In these statements a number of assumptions are involved and I therefore invite comparison of them with the assumptions that certain undisputed facts have compelled me to accept as reasonable and valid—facts that Professor

Crane brushes aside as either irrelevant or so unimportant as not to deserve notice.

Now for the facts. My first fact is one that Professor Crane will not dispute: that the only government that actively sought a union of the colonies in 1754 was that of Massachusetts Bay. Early in the year Governor Shirley in addressing the General Court on the need of a colonial union declared: "For the formation of this general union, Gentlemen, there is no time to be lost." In response to this note of urgency, the two houses affirmed that a union of the several governments "has long been desired by this Province. . . . We are still in the same sentiments, and shall use our Endeavors to effect it." In line with this statement the *first* of the instructions drawn up by the General Court for the guidance of the Massachusetts Bay commissioners called upon them to work for "a general, firm and perpetual union & confederacy" of the colonies. Despite the disappearance of Governor Shirley's letter of May 1, 1754, to Sir Thomas Robinson, the latter's reply to it, as well as to an earlier letter, leaves one with the conviction that the commissioners appointed to attend the Albany Congress by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay were engaged in the spring of that year in the preparation of a plan of union. Writing on June 21, 1754, Robinson affirmed "that every thing recommended by the said Assembly will be fully considered, & that immediate Directions will be given for promoting the Plan of a general concert between his Majesty's Colonies, in order to prevent . . . Encroachments upon the Dominions of the Crown of Great Britain" (*Correspondence of William Shirley*, New York, 1912, II, 70-71).

Again, according to Benjamin Franklin, beyond his own "Short Hints," "several of the Commissioners had form'd plans of the same kind" (Writings [ed. A. H. Smyth], I, 387), which were presented to the Congress for consideration. Whether Governor Shirley's secret ambitions influenced the commissioners or because of the influence of precedent based on the seventeenth-century New England Confederation, it is clear that when the Massachusetts Bay commissioners appeared at Albany they favored, on account of the extent of the country, two or more unions. At least this was what they reported to the General Court upon their return to Boston (Mass. Archives, 4:463). Further, it was charged by de Lancey, who as Lieutenant Governor of New York presided at the Congress, that the Massachusetts Bay commissioners were acting "with an aim to procure the President's [President General's] chair for their Governor." This was a basic feature in the so-called "New England Plan," as was also the idea of grouping the colonies into two unions. It may be noted in passing that de Lancey never brought the charge against the Connecticut commissioners that *they* sought to unite the office of President General and that of Governor of Massachusetts Bay, although that was, according to Professor Crane's interpretation, an objective of the committee of the Connecticut Assembly in originating the "New England Plan."

We now come to the highly confidential letter that Thomas Hutchinson, who occupied the combined posts of Lieutenant Governor and Chief Justice of Massachusetts Bay, wrote in 1769 to Governor Francis Bernard, who was in England. This communication is to be found in the October number of PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY and has to do with the dangerous unrest in the

colonies. Before closing his letter Hutchinson made the following statement: "At the congress at Albany in 1754 I was in fav^r of an Union of the gov^{ts} for certain Purposes & I drew the Plan which was then accepted [but] if I had imagined such absurd notions of gov^t could ever have entred into the heads of the Americans as are now publicly avowed I should then have been [as much] against any sort of union as I was for it" (Mass. Archives, 26:395).

If there was no basis for such an assertion on the part of Hutchinson, we would have to brand him either as a knave or as one who had reached the age of senility with the consequent loss of memory. Few of those who have followed his career in the 1760's and 1770's, especially as set forth in his writings, would agree to place him in either category. To argue that he confused in this letter the Albany representation to the Board of Trade, which he drafted—something that occupied very little of the time of the Congress and that Hutchinson barely mentioned later in reporting to the Massachusetts Bay General Court—with the Albany Plan of Union which, with Indian affairs, occupied most of the time of the Congress over a period of weeks, is unbelievable in a man who displayed such acumen in 1769.

Hutchinson's confidential disclosure, when taken in conjunction with a careful evaluation of all the other evidence that has come to light seems to confirm the view that the Massachusetts Bay commissioners, in order to carry out their leading instruction from the General Court, brought to Albany a detailed and very carefully drafted plan of union. It also appears that in the course of the proceedings and, more specifically, in the final stages of the work of the committee on a plan of union, with time running out, a decision was reached. This was to combine the structure and phraseology of the Massachusetts Bay plan with the concepts of a general union. Stripping it of its more restricted and traditional features, Franklin, as chairman—we are led to assume—used this plan as a model upon which he grafted with great skill the distinctive and forward-looking ideas that characterize both his original "Short Hints" and the improved version preserved in the handwriting of Meshech Weare. Such a process would have carried out fully the spirit of the instruction the Congress gave to the committee on a plan of union, which was to "digest" the various plans "into one general plan for the inspection of this Board" [that is, the Congress]. This, I believe, is just what happened in evolving the Albany Plan of Union.

We now come to consider the specific point most stressed by Professor Crane in his present letter and which was also emphasized in his earlier "Letter to the Editor" of *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. This is the caption that appears at the head of the "New England Plan" as published in the Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections* for 1801, which, according to him, is misleading. It reads as follows: "Plan of a proposed Union of the several colonies of Massachusetts-Bay, New-Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode-Island, New-York & New-Jersey, for their mutual Defence and Security, & for extending the British Settlements Northward & Westward of said Colonies in North-America; recommended by Commissioners from several Colonies, met in Congress, at Albany, June 14, 1754." The part of the caption to which he takes exception is the final

clause that he regards as an interpolation by the editor of the particular volume of the *Collections* in which it is printed and he states his reasons for this position at length. These involve not only facts but also assumptions.

Whether Professor Crane is right or wrong in his position that the clause is an unauthorized interpolation surely cannot be settled until what must have been the fair copy of the "New England Plan" that was sent to the Connecticut Assembly is discovered or additional evidence comes to light. One need only look at the reproduction of the first page of the "New England Plan" as preserved in the Trumbull Papers (PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY, October 1959, p. 302) to realize that this disfigured manuscript would never have been sent to the Assembly. What one can affirm is that, without some such clause in the caption, or other clear explanation in the body of the report of the committee, the reason for the appearance of this plan of union in conjunction with the report becomes shrouded in mystery and is a most extraordinary thing. If, on the other hand, one accepts as fact that the committee, in deciding to send to the Assembly a fair copy of the "New England Plan," was itself responsible for adding to the caption the clause "recommended by Commissioners from several Colonies, met in Congress, at Albany, June 14, 1754," this clears up many difficult points.

Hoping to locate a fair copy of the plan, before preparing my paper I visited the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Massachusetts Archives, the Connecticut Historical Society and the Connecticut State Library, but my search was without success. In this connection I also discussed the problem with those most likely to be in a position to help me. There seemed to be general agreement among them that a fair copy of the "New England Plan" must have been sent and also agreement that some clear explanation would be considered necessary for the presence of the plan as a part of the report, and that it was to be expected in the fair copy either by a clause in the caption or otherwise. I myself had reached a similar conclusion and therefore felt justified in acting on the assumption—until proof is forthcoming that it was not—that the clause objected to by Professor Crane was an integral part of the caption and was in existence at the time the Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections for 1800* were published.

Put in these terms the inclusion of the "New England Plan" in the report is intelligible since it makes clear that another, more limited plan than the rejected Albany Plan of Union, had earlier received consideration at Albany and a certain amount of support there. Yet the committee did not recommend the "New England Plan" to the consideration of the Connecticut Assembly, nor is it likely that any group of Connecticut men would have supported its adoption in 1754. This position is certainly in harmony with the statement of Abiel Holmes in his *American Annals* (II, 201) published in 1805. Now informed on the *real* Albany Plan of Union which he describes—knowledge of which he obviously did not possess in 1801 when he edited the Massachusetts Historical Society *Collections*—he has the following comment on the Albany Congress in a footnote: "Another plan, then proposed, is in Coll. Hist. Soc. vii. 203-207. Who composed it does not appear; perhaps Mr. Hutchinson of Massachusetts." Although Holmes, as Professor Crane has

pointed out, examined and initialed the manuscript of the plan among the Trumbull Papers, it is significant that he did not attribute it to Connecticut.

One last point I must make. In my most recent article, which has led Professor Crane to write his second "Letter," I indicated that the "New England Plan," as published in the *Collections* of both the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Connecticut Historical Society, was apparently not the plan that the Massachusetts Bay commissioners brought to Albany, but was one based upon it and that amended it in certain particulars. My position is that the manuscript copy of the "New England Plan" in the Connecticut State Library, only when stripped of the amendments to it in the form of interlineations, discloses the plan that Hutchinson declared that he himself had drafted. The amendments to it may have been introduced at a meeting of commissioners in Albany on June 14—in line with the indications in Franklin's *Memoirs* (p. 326) as edited by the late Professor Max Farrand, that "we met the other Commissioners and met at Albany about the Middle of June." This is the position assumed in my recent article. However, these amendments could alternately have been inserted in the transcript of the Hutchinson plan by the Connecticut committee on the union, as I suggested in my earlier paper—a view which, as stated above, I now conceive to present great difficulties. In other words, my position remains unchanged: that the "New England Plan" represents a modification—whether made at Albany or in Connecticut—of the original Massachusetts Bay plan of union. As a result of the loss of most of Hutchinson's papers in the Stamp Act riot in August, 1765, this (in the form of the transcript in the handwriting of Jonathan Trumbull) will doubtless, when relieved of its amendments, remain the clearest indication of the type of union the Massachusetts Bay commissioners had in mind when appearing at Albany prepared to carry out their instructions from the General Court to work for "a general, firm and perpetual union & confederacy."

That the tentative position I have assumed seems to have been accepted by some scholars may be indicated by the fact that after my article on "Thomas Hutchinson and the Framing of the Albany Plan of Union, 1754" and also the "Letters to the Editor" of 1951 had appeared, I was approached by the publication committee of the Old South Association of Boston (which has done so much to develop an interest in carefully edited source materials) with a request to produce a new *Old South Leaflet* on the Albany Plan of Union. It was indicated to me that the editing of the earlier leaflet on this topic did not represent present standards of historical scholarship and it was desired that I would embody my findings in a new leaflet. This leaflet was published in 1953.

Before completing this letter I must repeat what I said in my 1951 "Letter to the Editor" on what was involved in undertaking the writing of my first article. It is equally pertinent to my book and to both my articles on the subject of the Albany Plan of Union:

To reconstruct the history of the background of the Albany Plan of Union it was imperative to take into account [both direct and indirect evidence]. . . . To neglect either category of evidence is to

run the risk of grave historical distortion. Further, it seemed to me that only in strict observance of two great canons of historical reconstruction could I feel assured that the hypothesis that I set forth both in my book and in the article would possess any permanent significance. One of these canons involves the principle that in arriving at an acceptable interpretation of the facts of history and with it a sound solution of any historical problem at least two things must be kept constantly in view by the student: he should neither do violence to any fact nor ignore it, if it is pertinent. The other canon involves the principle that as between two hypotheses relating to the solution of a historical problem, that one which most nearly brings under scrutiny and reconciles all pertinent facts without doing violence to any of them is apt to be more in accord with reality than one which leaves out of account many such facts and therefore leaves them unreconciled with facts that have been selected for consideration. . . . Whether Professor Crane's hypothesis, with its assumptions, more nearly measures up to this exacting standard than my own, with its corresponding assumptions, I must leave to the judgment of other scholars.

In conclusion let me express the hope that others will seek the opportunity and find the means to throw additional light on the problems I have raised in my book, in my other writings on the subject of the Albany Plan of Union, and in the letters that Professor Crane and I have exchanged.

Lehigh University

LAWRENCE HENRY GIPSON

“America’s first man of the world”

—New York Times

THE PAPERS OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Volume I, 1706-34

Leonard W. Labaree, Editor

Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., Associate Editor

This is the first volume to come from a great scholarly undertaking, the assembly and editing of Benjamin Franklin’s complete writings and correspondence. Sponsored jointly by the American Philosophical Society and Yale University, this new edition of forty volumes will contain everything that Franklin wrote that can be found and, for the first time, in full or abstract, all letters addressed to him, the whole arranged in chronological order. To be published over a period of fifteen years, it will supersede all previous editions, for thousands of letters by Franklin have been located since Smyth’s edition of fifty years ago.

This first volume contains more than three times the amount of material as the Smyth edition for this period, from Franklin’s birth in 1706 to the end of 1734. It shows the young Franklin of Boston and Philadelphia as a man of letters—essayist, journalist, pamphleteer—and as a rising young printer.

Here are the literary pieces he wrote and printed in the *New-England Courant*, the *American Weekly Mercury*, or the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, or as separately printed pamphlets. Here are the first issues of *Poor Richard’s Almanack*. Here is his famous Epitaph and his ritual for private worship, “Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion.” Here are legal documents and papers connected with his printing business. The genealogy of Franklin’s complicated family is the fullest ever compiled, with a chronology of Franklin’s first twenty-nine years. Each volume has its own index, and there will be a cumulative index at the end.

A large proportion of Franklin’s literary production of the 1720’s and 1730’s has never been reprinted; therefore this volume is a valuable addition to the available body of early American materials. Especially significant to collectors will be the reproduction in photographic facsimile, for the first time, of the entire twenty-four pages of the “first impression” of the *Poor Richard*, that for 1733, from the unique copy in the Rosenbach Foundation.

Beautifully designed and printed, with full color and half-tone illustrations.

\$7.50



YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
