

NOTE: The Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 was James Madison's daily record of the debates during the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. This excerpt was recorded on May 29, 1787, when the Virginia Plan, or Randolph Resolutions, was presented to the delegates. Madison's Notes are in black. Historical context has been added in red.

Tuesday May 29, 1787

Mr. RANDOLPH then opened the main business. He expressed his regret, that it should fall to him, rather than those, who were of longer standing in life and political experience, to open the great subject of their mission...

[Mr. RANDOLPH] then proposed as conformable to his ideas the following resolutions, which he explained one by one. Edmund Randolph was a delegate from Virginia. Other Virginia delegates had more experience, but Randolph was selected to present the ideas of the Virginia delegation because he was such a good speaker.

1. ...the Articles of Confederation ought to be so corrected and enlarged as to accomplish the objects proposed by their institution; namely, "common defense, security of liberty and general welfare." The Constitutional Convention was called to alter the Articles of Confederation, not to replace them.

2. ...the rights of suffrage in the National Legislature ought to be proportioned to the Quotas of contribution, or to the number of free inhabitants, as the one or the other rule may seem best in different cases. Under the Articles of Confederation, each state had one vote in the Congress regardless of its population.

3. ...the National Legislature ought to consist of two branches [houses]. The Articles of Confederation had only one house in the legislature.

4. ...the members of the first branch of the National Legislature ought to be elected by the people of the several States.... The first branch refers to what we call today the House of Representatives.

5. ...the members of the second branch of the National Legislature ought to be elected by those of the first, out of a proper number of persons nominated by the individual

Legislatures.... The second branch refers to the Senate. The 17th amendment led to people directly voting for their senators after 1913.

6. ...each branch [house] ought to possess the right of originating Acts [laws]...
The House of Representatives has sole authority to originate laws related to funding.

7. ...a National Executive be instituted; To be chosen by the National Legislature...and that besides a general authority to execute the National laws, it ought to enjoy the Executive rights vested in Congress by the Confederation. Citizens vote for the president of the United States, but an electoral college ultimately chooses the president.

8. ...the Executive and a convenient number of the National Judiciary, ought to compose a Council of revision with authority to examine every act of the National Legislature before it shall operate. The delegates to the convention decided against a Council of Revision.

9. ...a National Judiciary be established to consist of one or more supreme tribunals, and of inferior tribunals to be chosen by the National Legislature.... There was no federal judicial branch under the Articles of Confederation.

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