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Jeremy Belknap: Notes of Convention Debates 19 January 1788 (excerpt)

. . . *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 & iredular.

after the adjornmt & 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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