

## No. 17.

Colonel Boyle to the Commissioners on the part of Virginia.  
Smith's Tavern, August 8th, 1824.

Gentlemen:—In declining a continuance of the correspondence between us, I do so because I consider your powers of so limited a nature, that it can lead to no happy result— Could I believe you had any discretionary power, I would willingly continue a communication; but knowing you are bound by the act of assembly of Virginia to commence the line at Fairfax stone, and that the Maryland commissioners must begin at the most western source of the North Branch of the Potomac river, a correspondence is entirely useless. Tied down as both sides are by their respective statutes, the only question for consideration is, whether Fairfax stone is at the most western source of the North Branch of the Potomac river? I am of opinion that it is not; and as we have no mutual point of beginning, I consider the object of the commission cannot be effected. I am unwilling to continue a discussion of any points extraneous to the main question, which is, Where are we to begin? And as the two commissioners cannot agree where to begin the line, I must determine to end a correspondence which can only lead us away from the true object of inquiry. I am sorry to differ on this subject from my colleague; but as I act on my own responsibility, so I must answer to my government if I err. I know that in all the conversations I have had with you, individually or collectively, officially or unofficially, I have stated, that the Maryland statute marked out a beginning, from which I did not feel myself at liberty to depart.

A discretion was vested in the Maryland commissioners to settle and adjust any claim of this state to territory claimed by Virginia; but as you appear to have no such authority, I consider the want of mutuality as depriving us of the right to exercise it.

The powers of the two commissions do not correspond, and cannot consequently be brought to unite.

I have the honour to remain your friend,

JAMES BOYLE.

To H. L. Opie, T. F. Mason, and H. Boye, Esquires,  
Commissioners on the part of Virginia:

True copy from the original. Test,

JOHN BREWER, Secretary

to the Maryland Commissioners.