

REPORT TO HIS CONSTITUENTS

Gaultier de Biauzat (1739–1815), Representative from Clermont-Ferrand

Tuesday, 23 June 1789

Everything was arranged for the good of the kingdom, with the exception of some difficulties which were still left to be dealt with upon the subject of the honorary distinctions of the orders, when some ill-intentioned persons sought to frighten the King. For that reason the transactions intended for conciliation were presented to him as capable of unsettling the throne.

The Queen, who was the first object of the intrigue, was induced to present herself before the King with the Dauphin and interest the father in maintaining the rights of the crown that were said to be attacked.

The success of the evil thinkers was kept secret and with caution, like the Brienne system, and we were given the frightful spectacle today of the triumph of the aristocracy. The King, deceived, consecrated pretensions destructive of the monarchy.

There were no longer invitations to a general reunion. The too feeble insinuations of the discourse of 5 May for the vote by head had been replaced by imperative instructions to vote by order, except in some few cases; and the distinction of the orders, deliberating separately with the veto badly veiled, has been expressly declared constitutional.

To bring the people over to the party of the disguised aristocracy, the skillful perfidy has been used of gathering some of the principal views of our *cahiers* and forming from them a declaration of the desires of the King, in order that it may appear that the government is mindful of the public good and also to authorize the announcement, made in too expressive terms, that the states general can be dispensed with.

I believe that I have spoken to you of a project which transpired the 16th of this month. Here is its execution. It is a production after the manner of Brienne, that is to say, much evil covered by an apparent and seducing good.

The deputies were obliged to pass through a body of troops to reach the hall of estates, without even having the liberty of choosing from the three avenues that led there and had been open to all up to this day.

The high clergy and the nobility submitted to the call by bailliages. In this interval, which lasted nearly an hour and a half, the deputies of the commons were outdoors in the rain. They refused to submit to the call. They then entered and took their seats as usual.

The wishes of the King having been announced, he withdrew with very different ideas from those which should have delighted him 4 and 5 May. The evil-minded among the clergy and nobility applauded twice at the reading of the fruit of their manœuvres. The others and the whole assembly of the deputies of the commons maintained a gloomy silence.

One of the last expressions of the King was for us to meet tomorrow in separate chambers. The clergy went out after the King. The nobility filed out following the clergy. And we remained unmoved. It was attempted to fatigue us by noise and dust. A multitude of workmen was employed for that reason to take down the throne and theatre and remove its tapestries. We suffered in silence.

De Brézé then came to invite us verbally, on the part of the King, to retire. The president replied that the national assembly was going to deliberate.

We have deliberated and decreed that we persist in our preceding decrees, and we declared all the members of the assembly under the safeguard of the nation....

Wednesday, 24 June 1789

Yesterday's session was generally unexpected. Necker and de Montmorin offered their resignations. The King himself saw the danger of accepting them. The best element here called upon Necker to beg him to endure the

results of his involuntary wrongs. Sent for by the Queen and then by the King, he was accompanied by a great multitude of people, all respectable, who traversed the apartments which led to that of the king with him and in spite of him and he was re-conducted home as in a triumph.

We have again been surrounded today by bayonets. But our grief gave place to joy when we saw the majority of the clergy bring its registers and enter our hall majestically. The minority is deliberating at the present time (five o'clock in the evening) upon a motion, the substance of which is that they shall constitute themselves as the true chamber of the clergy under the pretext that it has the greatest number of bishops.

Attracted to the street by an unexpected noise, I have just seen an immense populace and troops which filled my neighborhood.

The Archbishop of Paris was hooted at in going from the assembly of the clergy and the populace accompanied him to the end of my street where he lives. Some stones were thrown at his carriage and at his windows. I believe it was my duty to speak to the groups of people, as many of my colleagues did, and tranquility was restored.

I have just learned at the *coucher* of the King that the Archbishop of Paris went to carry to him his complaints. I do not know against whom. I had a conversation with his brother, whom I did not know, and I was obliged to contradict a too violent addition to the recital of the scene by his brother.

I learned that the minority of the nobility will return to us tomorrow and I prophesy that we shall declare ourselves the states general before noon.

Fred Morrow Fling, *Source Studies on the French Revolution* (1907):22–25.