

The Oath of the Tennis Court (June 20, 1789)

BAILLY: I do not need to tell you in what a grievous situation the Assembly finds itself; I propose that we deliberate on what action to take under such tumultuous circumstances.

M. Mounier offers an opinion, seconded by Messieurs Target, Chapelier, and Barnave; he points out how strange it is that the hall of the Estates General should be occupied by armed men; that no other locale has been offered to the National Assembly; that its president was not forewarned by other means than letters from the Marquis de Brezé, and the national representatives by public posters alone; that, finally, they were obliged to meet in the Tennis Court of Old Versailles street, so as not to interrupt their work; that wounded in their rights and heir dignity, warned of the intensity of intrigue and determination with which the king is pushed to disastrous measures, the representatives of the nation bind themselves to the public good and the interests of the fatherland with a solemn oath.

This proposal is approved by unanimous applause.

The Assembly quickly decrees the following:

The National Assembly, considering that it has been called to establish the constitution of the realm, to bring about the regeneration of public order, and to maintain the true principles of monarchy; nothing may prevent it from continuing its deliberations in any place it is forced to establish itself; and, finally, the National Assembly exists wherever its members are gathered.

Decrees that all members of this assembly immediately take a solemn oath never to separate, and to reassemble wherever circumstances require, until the constitution of the realm is established and fixed upon solid foundations; and that said oath having been sworn, all

members and each one individually confirm this unwavering resolution with his signature.

Bailly: I demand that the secretaries and I swear the oath first; which they do immediately according to the following formula:

We swear never to separate ourselves from the National Assembly, and to reassemble wherever circumstances require, until the constitution of the realm is drawn up and fixed upon solid foundations.

All the members swear the same oath between the hands of the president.