

a support bill until Morris had approved the bills it wanted passed. During the stalemate the assembly granted the government no money, and Morris withheld assent from every act it passed save one granting supplies for the New England expedition against Louisburg in 1745. Only in Morris's last assembly, which first met in February 1746, did it seem that this deadlock might be broken. Both sides appeared ready to retreat from their extreme positions and to reconcile their differences, but not for long. In the midst of its proceedings, the assembly learned that the Board of Trade, acting on Morris's advice, intended to recommend royal disallowance of a Fee Act approved in 1743 by both the governor and the assembly. Enraged at what it interpreted as an act of treachery by Morris, the assembly renewed its demand for his assent to certain popular legislation before passage of a support bill. Morris agreed, but only if the assembly promised to increase the appropriations it was planning to make to the government. This the assembly refused to do. Suddenly the prospect of stalemate once more confronted the province. In the midst of this crisis, however, Morris, who had been ill for several years, died on May 21, 1746. Yet not even death could dispel the bitterness his administration had engendered. Three years later, when his widow petitioned the assembly for payment of his salary arrears, the assembly turned down the request by an overwhelming majority, remarking that hers was "a Subject so universally disliked in this Colony, that there is none, except those who are immediately concerned in point of Interest, or particularly influenced by those who are, will say one Word in its Favour."

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JONATHAN BELCHER (January 8, 1681/2–August 31, 1757), Massachusetts merchant and politician, was born in Cambridge, the second son of seven children, to Andrew and Sarah (Gilbert) Belcher. The family was rooted in New England society: Jonathan's grandfather had arrived in the 1630s; his father had steadily accumulated property and become one of Boston's wealthiest merchants and a member of the provincial council. After he was graduated from Harvard in 1699, Jonathan entered his father's business. In 1705 he married Mary Partridge, the daughter of New Hampshire's lieutenant governor, and entered Boston's Second Church. On his father's death in 1717, he embarked on a public career.

In a political world rent by constitutional conflict between executive authority and the legislature, this moderate and unreflective political practitioner shunned permanent identification with either ideological position: first, as a member of the council, he defended Governor William Shute; then, as agent of the house of representatives in London, he opposed Governor William Burnet; and, finally, he returned in 1730 as governor of Massachusetts and New Hampshire with

instructions to defend the principles he had left to contest. His success—eleven years' tenure as governor—rested on a careful cultivation of the Anglo-American patronage system. After four trips to London, he had important friends and allies who defended his interest with the Walpole government. For example, in return for supporting toleration for Massachusetts Quakers, his brother-in-law Richard Partridge, a prominent London Quaker, who was New Jersey's agent, recruited the English Friends to exert influence in the governor's behalf.

However, although conflict between the representatives and the executive abated during his administration, the years of politics earned him enemies whose London allies campaigned to unseat him. In 1741, the governor's uncompromising opposition to the popular Land Bank antagonized the legislature and discredited his ability to rule, and with the simultaneous demise of the Walpole government his opponents argued for his replacement by William Shirley.

In August of 1741, Belcher retired to his estate at Milton. Alone—his wife, who had borne him five children, had died in 1736—he brooded over life's mishaps. In 1744 inactivity roused him to book passage for London, where he hoped to retrieve his fortune through a pension or another appointment. He found none of his familiar patrons at Whitehall, and he could curry the favor only of Lord Hardwicke. Though officialdom received him kindly, it was unresponsive to his pleas. Humiliated and embittered by months of waiting in the anterooms of power, Belcher withdrew to the congenial community of London's dissenters, the Congregationalists and Quakers. He met Mrs. Louise Teale, a widow with some fortune, and decided to "commit matrimony" on condition that he find a suitable appointment. In 1746, he learned that Lewis Morris, the governor of New Jersey, lay dying; although the office was of little consequence and small reward, he pursued the opportunity. Rival New Jersey factions contested the post: Morris's

allies sought to maintain control of the executive, and their agent Ferdinand John Paris nominated the governor's son Robert Hunter Morris; in turn the rival Quaker leaders of Burlington hoped to name their own and, through Partridge, discovered their candidate in Jonathan Belcher. The London Friends persuaded the duke of Newcastle to appoint Belcher, collected the requisite fees, and prepared for his residence at Burlington. Before his departure they advised him on the situation in New Jersey.

In August of 1747, the new governor arrived by way of New York, a self-styled exile to an "obscure corner of the world." On his progress south to Burlington, discussions with local politicians and clergymen confirmed his initial prejudices. With its religious and ethnic diversity, this "Wilderness of Nova Caesarea" compared poorly with his native Massachusetts. An enthusiastic friend of the Great Awakening, Belcher discovered a few scattered churches to his liking in the north, but none in Burlington. On conference with the local evangelicals he concluded that "vital religion" was a tender plant in the Jerseys. The people were a crude lot: the province needed "a Nursery of religion and Learning." And most pressing, the province was aflame with riot: long-standing litigation between the East Jersey proprietors, principally James Alexander and Lewis Morris, and the farming communities in the Elizabethtown-Newark area had erupted into violence. While Jerseymen welcomed the governor with promises of support, and the Burlington Quakers admitted him to their society, the aging governor felt estranged and disappointed. Taking up residence a mile from Burlington, he put the problems of office from his mind and resolved to devote his declining years to religion. Soon, he summoned his "Queen of Nova Caesarea" and on September 9, 1748, he and Mrs. Teale were married.

Belcher entered an uneasy political calm. During the previous decade the irascible Governor Morris and the council, composed of his friends and relatives

(principally James Alexander and Morris's son Robert Hunter Morris), had angered assemblymen from East Jersey by defending proprietary claims. Governor Morris had also offended prominent Quaker legislators from the west by denying them patronage, and the entire legislature by insulting its privileges. Government was at an impasse. The self-styled "ploughmen" legislators demanded regulation of the courts and legal fees and regular elections; the council pressed for strict measures against the rioters. Neither prevailed. If Belcher's appointment gratified the assemblymen, the councillors greeted the news with reservations. Agent Paris and Robert Hunter Morris warned of the governor's alliance with the "ploughmen," but Alexander convinced the majority, weary of contention, to suspend judgment. In turn, Belcher translated his predisposition to avoid the burdens of office into a principle of statesmanlike aloofness; while recognizing his debt to the Quakers, he was unwilling to antagonize the Morris faction.

In the first meeting with the legislature the governor recommended action on the riots while deftly resisting the council's pressures for vigorous action and at the same time avoiding association with the rioters. Soon the two houses, left to themselves, reached a compromise, with the assembly introducing a bill for the "preventing of Riots" and the council an amnesty bill. The tactic seemed successful: Belcher signed nineteen bills, including a treasury supply and regulations of sheriff's appointments and court fees. He also promised to recommend to the crown a bill for issuing paper money in excess of his instructions. In Burlington, surrounded by allies, he heard his praises sung and believed that he had been successful. Yet that comfort proved illusory: the rioters rejected amnesty and continued to harass the sheriffs of Morris and Essex counties. With Robert Hunter Morris seizing the initiative, the council pressed for vigorous measures. For example, when it presented Belcher with a

petition to the crown for aid against the rioters, he declined to give his support. The council was soon convinced by Morris's warnings. Belcher's open and regular consultation with the "ploughmen" and his infrequent correspondence with the Morrisites awakened fears that their interest was in jeopardy. Finally, Alexander was persuaded to join the opposition. In 1749, Morris joined Paris in London and Belcher warned Partridge to beware of their activities.

The weakness of the governor's position became apparent. Political lobbying in London severely undermined his authority: Morris outmaneuvered Partridge and persuaded the Board of Trade that the governor was consorting with the rioters. Belcher was reprimanded, and Whitehall rejected his nominations to the council in favor of Robert Morris's recommendations. Even friends proved unreliable allies. At times Belcher scolded and prodded the assembly, but to no avail: no riot or tax legislation was passed. In 1751, he grew desperate. On dissolving the assembly, he appealed to the electorate for better representatives and cajoled friends to stand for the legislature. But the results only underscored his impotence: his candidates were not elected. Though the assembly came to agreement with the council on a tax bill, Belcher's influence was negligible. And the next year he helplessly watched the two houses deadlock over taxes. Frustration drove Belcher to desperate measures. He purged the council of offensive members only to earn further reprimands from the Board of Trade. In such a mood he received a suggestion from the assembly leaders that he could sign a tax bill without the council's assent. Only Alexander's firm correction prevented him from pursuing the tactic.

Essentially, Belcher believed that religious and educational decay had brought in the province's ills. A champion of the New Lights and a friend of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, he made religious awakening an

integral part of his public life. He invited Gilbert Tennent to preach before the legislature on the principles of godly government. He listened with enthusiasm to Tennent's program to build a college; as New England's colleges had brought pious leadership and learning for the happiness of the community, this "infant college" could reform this "unpolisht ignorant Part of the World" and instruct the "Rising Generation" according to the standards of "vital religion." The college, "My little Daughter," captured his imagination. Quickly he lent his support, first by rewriting the charter to include himself on the Board of Trustees and then by seeking funds for its construction. After Quakers and Anglicans effectively prevented the assembly from lending aid, he persuaded the government of Connecticut to sponsor a lottery. He wrote throughout the colonies and Great Britain seeking subscriptions. His will provided that his library be given to the college. In 1748, the trustees of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) conferred on him the M.A. degree, and in 1756 they offered to name the first building Belcher Hall, an offer he declined, suggesting instead Nassau Hall.

By 1751, Belcher's government stood at precarious equipoise. While friendly with legislative leaders, Belcher found the assembly oblivious to his recommendations and immune to his influence. It would pass no more riot legislation, and if it passed any treasury supply Belcher could not take credit. Morris had effectively checked the governor's interest in London, but the Quakers well protected his commission. In the fall, Belcher moved his family to Elizabethtown, where he hoped to find a more healthful climate, and within the year he joined the congregation of Elihu Spencer, a friend of Jonathan Edwards. In the following years he progressively withdrew from government. Weary of politics, he called fewer assemblies and corresponded infrequently with the legislative leaders. The style of his administration reminded the "ploughmen" of Lewis Morris: his appointments

violated residency requirements, and he called the legislature to locations other than the regular sites of Perth Amboy or Burlington. Yet the governor, isolated and preoccupied with the college, was oblivious to this gradual estrangement. Meanwhile, relations with the council improved. Robert Morris, appointed governor of Pennsylvania in 1754, no longer threatened Belcher. At the same time, the border dispute with New York challenged the proprietary interests of Morris and Alexander, and they joined the governor to protect the New Jersey claims. In 1756, Belcher nominated Alexander's son William to the council.

Renewed hostilities with the French forced Belcher to confront distasteful assembly politics. In 1754, Virginia Governor Robert Dinwiddie requested a contingent of New Jersey troops to join his defense of the western frontier, and the Board of Trade recommended an inter-colonial conference to meet with the Six Nations. Sick in bed, Belcher summoned the assembly to Elizabethtown instead of the regular site at Perth Amboy. To his recommendations the "ploughmen" replied with a list of grievances, including the extraordinary place of meeting. The assembly disposed of the military question by declaring the peril less obvious and the province too poor. Belcher scolded, dissolved the assembly, and called new elections, but he learned once more the ineffectiveness of the tactic. His patriotic appeals brought meager contributions to the war effort. News of General Braddock's defeat in the summer of 1755 and rumors of Indians approaching the Jersey borders spurred Belcher to call for the destruction of French Canada. Instead, the assembly pressed for redress of grievances. Only after a personal address by Lord Loudon, commander of the British forces in North America, did it vote 500 men. Before the campaign concluded, Belcher was stricken with palsy, and he died on August 31, 1757.

Since his death Belcher has fared poorly in the hands of historians. They have dismissed him as a sycophant and nar-

row-minded puritan, epitomizing the most distasteful elements of his age. Doubtless he was a commonplace citizen of his times, but with a changing appreciation of the eighteenth century, his life requires serious reconsideration. Reevaluation need not exaggerate his importance: his accomplishments in New Jersey, with the exception of the College of New Jersey, were minor. But his career is illuminating, if only because he managed to survive in a political world where the average governor could expect to last a mere five years. In sum, his political life illustrates the dynamics of provincial politics—the limitations on the governor and the importance of both the structure of the imperial patronage system and the homegrown legislative process. His career also reflects religion's importance in politics in colonial America, in terms of alliances and in the definition of public policy.

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FRANCIS BERNARD (July? 1712–June 16, 1779) was royal governor of New Jersey for two years, actively directing the prov-

ince's war effort from mid-1758 to mid-1760. The son of the Reverend Francis Bernard and Margery (Winlowe) Bernard, of Brightwell, Oxfordshire, he was baptized on July 12, 1712. He attended St. Peter's College, Westminster, and in 1729 he became a student at Christ Church, Oxford, from which he was graduated in 1736 with a master of arts degree. He then turned his energy and scholarship to the practice of law. In 1741 he married Amelia Offley, whose cousin, the second Lord Barrington, became his sponsor. Besides gaining sufficient legal notice to be elected to offices in Lincoln and Boston, he edited the *Latin Odes* of Anthony Alsop, published in 1752.

This capable and ambitious man, approved as royal governor of New Jersey on January 27, 1758, arrived in Perth Amboy with his wife and four of his children on June 14. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported that four other children had remained in England and four had died. In the autumn of 1759 another child was born to the Bernards in New Jersey. John Adams later described Bernard as "avaricious to a most infamous degree; needy, at the same time, and having a numerous family to provide for."

As the governor himself expressed it to his patron, Lord Barrington, almost a year after he arrived in New Jersey, "till Nature sets bounds to the Number of my children, (which is not done yet) I know not how to limit my wants or desires." Various reports state that eight or ten children survived him, and it is clear that the large family contributed to his restless wish for a more rewarding position.

In two years of service, Francis Bernard proved an efficient, politic, and considerate administrator. Certainly he was put to the test immediately. He arrived to find a colony with its government in semi-suspension, under pressures from the royal government and the other colonies to contribute increasingly to the war against the French. The colony also suffered from an atmosphere of crisis that had spread from a rash of Indian raids on the Minisink frontier. The previous gov-