**The Executive Branch**

Another issue the convention had to address was the issue of the executive branch. The VA plan called for a national executive but did not say how long the executive should serve. The executive would have “a general authority to execute the national laws.”

The delegates generally agreed on the need for a separate executive independent of the legislature. (The executive would be called the “president.”) And they also agreed on giving the president the power to veto laws but only if his veto was subject to an override. But they could not easily agree on how the executive should be elected.

Delegates proposed many different methods for electing the president. One alternative was direct election by the people, but this drew controversy. Some delegates did not trust the judgment of the common man. Others thought it was simply impractical in a country with many rural communities spread out over a huge area.

Another alternative was to have the president chosen, either by the national or state legislatures. Some believed that an executive chosen by the national legislature would be a “mere creature” of the legislature without independent judgment.

Delegates voted more than 60 times before the method was chosen.

Two more questions about the president also provoked intense debate: How long should the president’s term be? And should limits be placed on the number of terms the president could serve? Underlying this debate was a fear of a monarchy taking over the country.