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Representation and Voting in Congress

The Articles of Confederation, adopted in 1777, were the first attempt at creating a national government for the newly independent United States. However, they faced significant challenges in handling issues of representation and voting in Congress. Let's explore how these issues were addressed in this early American government.

Representation in Congress

Under the Articles of Confederation, representation in Congress was based on the idea of equality among the states. Each state, regardless of its size or population, had an equal vote. This meant that Delaware, with a small population, had the same voting power as Virginia, which had a much larger population. While this may have seemed fair, it posed several challenges:

- **Unfair Representation:** Some states argued that this equal representation was unfair. They believed that larger states should have more influence in decision-making because they had more people.
- **Imbalanced Power:** The equal representation system gave smaller states more power per capita. This imbalance was a point of contention among the states.
- **Inflexibility:** The requirement of unanimous agreement among the states to make changes to the Articles of Confederation made it difficult to address the issue of representation.

Voting in Congress

In Congress, each state delegation consisted of a specific number of representatives chosen by the state legislature. These representatives were responsible for voting on various matters, including proposed laws and

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agreements with other countries. However, there were significant challenges related to voting:

- **Limited Powers:** Congress had limited powers and could not impose taxes, regulate trade, or enforce its decisions effectively. This made it difficult to address the country's needs and maintain order.
- **Difficulty in Decision-Making:** Decisions in Congress required a majority vote, which was not always easy to achieve. The unanimous agreement of all 13 states was often necessary to pass important legislation or make amendments to the Articles.
- **Ineffectiveness:** The requirement for unanimous agreement made it challenging to take swift action in times of crisis. It also hindered the ability to negotiate treaties and establish a strong national defense.

Challenges with Representation and Voting

The issues of representation and voting in Congress under the Articles of Confederation highlighted the weaknesses of this early form of government. The equal representation system and the requirement for unanimous agreement made it difficult to address the diverse needs of the states and respond effectively to national challenges.

In summary, the Articles of Confederation handled issues of representation and voting in Congress by providing each state with equal representation and requiring a majority vote for decision-making. However, these arrangements had their drawbacks, leading to disputes among states and hindering the government's ability to function effectively.

