

**Luther Martin: Genuine Information I, Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*, 28 December 1787**

Mr. MARTIN, when called upon, addressed the House nearly as follows:

Mr. Speaker, Since I was notified of the resolve of this Honourable House, that we should attend this day, to give information with regard to the proceedings of the late convention, my time has necessarily been taken up with business, and I have also been obliged to make a journey to the Eastern-Shore: These circumstances have prevented me from being as well prepared as I could wish, to give the information required— However, the few leisure moments I could spare, I have devoted to refreshing my memory, by looking over the papers and notes in my possession; and shall with pleasure, to the best of my abilities, render an account of my conduct.

It was not in my power to attend the convention immediately on my appointment—I took my seat, I believe, about the eighth or ninth of June. I found that Governor Randolph, of Virginia, had laid before the convention certain propositions for their consideration, which have been read to this House by my Honourable colleague, and I believe, he has very faithfully detailed the substance of the speech with which the business of the convention was opened, for though I was not there at the time, I saw notes which had been taken of it.—The members of the convention from the States, came there under different powers.

The greatest number, I believe under powers, nearly the same as those of the delegates of this State—Some came to the convention under the former appointment, authorising the meeting of delegates merely to regulate trade.—Those of Delaware were *expressly instructed to agree to no system which should take away from the States, that equality of suffrage secured by the original articles of confederation*. Before I arrived, a number of rules had been adopted to regulate the proceedings of the convention, by one of which, seven States might proceed to business, and consequently four States, the majority of that number, might eventually have agreed upon a system which was to effect the whole Union. By another, *the doors were to be shut*, and the *whole proceedings were to be kept secret*; and so far did this rule extend, that we were thereby prevented from corresponding with gentlemen in the different States upon the subjects under our discussion—a circumstance, Sir, which I confess, I greatly regretted—I had no idea that all the wisdom, integrity, and virtue of this State, or of the others, were centered in the convention—I wished to have corresponded freely, and confidentially, with eminent political characters in my own, and other States, not implicitly to be dictated to by them, but to give their sentiments due weight and consideration. So *extremely solicitous* were they, that their proceedings should not transpire, that *the members were prohibited even from taking copies of resolutions, on which the convention were deliberating, or extracts of any kind from the journals without formally moving for, and obtaining permission, by a vote of the convention for that purpose. . . .*

I mention this circumstance in compliance with the duty I owe this honorable body, not with a view to lessen those exalted characters, but to shew how far the greatest and

best of men may be led to adopt very improper measures, through error in judgment, State influence, or by other causes, and to shew that it is our duty not to suffer our eyes to be so far dazzled by the splendor of names, as to run blindfolded into what may be our destruction.

Mr. Speaker, I revere those illustrious personages as much as any man here. No man has a higher sense of the important services they have rendered this country. No member of the convention went there more disposed to pay a deference to their opinions; but I should little have deserved the trust this State reposed in me, if I could have sacrificed its dearest interests to my complaisance for their sentiments.

*(To be continued.)*

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