

Cassius, *New Jersey Journal*, 31 October 1787

I live in a country whose lands our predecessors (by maintaining families of Negro slaves, who destroyed more than they earned) have reduced to such a degree, that there is no prospect of raising winter grain on our old fields without plentifully manuring the land for the purpose. This, and the damages we have sustained by the depredations of the late war, you will not wonder, renders our harvest and other means scarce sufficient to pay our taxes and expenses, and maintain our families. These circumstances may in some measure apologize for my boldness in the present understanding; and I flatter myself with a hope that a good construction will at least be put upon my meaning by the public if my proposition should fail of its good intentions. In this consideration I feel myself very happy, while I am conscious to myself that I give the public no reason to blend the affections I harbor for my country, and countrymen, with an uncharitable appellation. That I shall please every reader I am not the least suspicious of, as I am well assured that this will be as equally exposed to the perusal of the injudicious and interested, as to the judicious and disinterested, if it is printed in your paper.

To come to the point then without further ceremony, I shall briefly show what I think were the chief motives which occasioned the appointment and proceedings of the late Grand Convention, and leave it to be judged whether they have fully considered and effected that business to which they were appointed.

The first motive which gave rise to the appointing members to attend the Grand Convention was a desire early to crush that malignant state of anarchy into which our Confederation was like to fall, and to lay and establish a permanent foundation on which we might build our national happiness and prosperity and perfect our constitutional unity. The second motive was in order to secure the property of individuals from the encroachments of puerile legislatures (which they have effectually done). And the third ought to have been to lessen the expenses which are appropriated for the support of the present government; which, instead of being lessened, are enlarged by our having to pay three men more in this state (as members of Congress) than we had before the Convention took place.

It thinks the exigencies which have during the late war, and I may say ever since, and still continue to attend our country ought to inspire every true friend to his country with such frugal sentiments at least as would make him zealous to establish the public credit of his country and the comfort and happiness of his countrymen.

Let us inquire whether our public funds are in a firm and commendable situation, and whether they will stand the test abroad if occasion should require; and, if we find them deficient, let us endeavor to retrieve their credit, and increase their revenues for the purpose of paying our foreign debts, and not pay our money to a superfluous number of men, when one-quarter of the number will answer all the purposes of government as well as the whole.

There are thirteen counties in the State of New Jersey, and four men for Assembly and Council for each county, which makes the number fifty-two; and if we allow no more for each of the

other states, at this calculation there will be six hundred and seventy-six men in pay, besides thirteen governors. Now the question is, whether we could not do without any of these men, and whether our rights and privileges would not be as well secured, and we have as good laws if we were to lodge the government in the Senate and House of Representatives which are to constitute our Congress? And as by the Constitution made by the Convention, all legislative powers are to be vested in this body of men, whether it would not be an act of propriety? It may perhaps be objected that it is too much trouble for these gentlemen to make laws for all the states. I wonder whether it will be too much trouble for these gentlemen to receive their fees, if not, certainly it ought not to be too much trouble for them to earn them. There might be much more said on this subject and more arguments used to support and recommend the form of government and political economy premised in these paragraphs; but I shall leave the more intricate parts of this subject for the speculations of some abler pen and wish my country all the advantages which may flow from the improvement of a noble theme.

Our country now requires men,
Whose gen'rous hearts a bribe disdain,
Who will be faithful, firm, and true,
And serve their country justly too.
When we are rul'd by men like these,
Who study out their country's ease,
This rising empire of the west,
May be with peace and honors blest.

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