Abraham Clark to Thomas Sinnickson
New York, 23 July 1788

I am favoured with yours of the 12th. instant by Major Story which I recd. yesterday,—his Journey I find has been unsuccessful.[1]

As to my sentiments respecting the New System of Government, altho' you do not ask, yet, as I find by your Letter it will be Acceptable, I think it not amiss to give them.—They have at no time been concealed.—I never liked the System in all its parts. I considered it from the first, more a Consolidated government than a federal, a government too expensive, and unnecessarily Oppressive in its Opperation; Creating a Judiciary undefined and unbounded.—with all these imperfections about it, I nevertheless wished it to go to the States from Congress just as it did, without any Censure or Commendation,[2] hoping that in Case of a general Adoption, the Wisdom of the States would soon amend it in the exceptionable parts; Strong fears however remained upon my mind untill I found the Custom of Recommending amendments with the Adoptions began to prevail.[3]—This set my mind at ease. It became clear in my opinion from the Oppositions, and the general concurrence in proposing amendmts. that the present plan must undergo some alterations to make it more agreable to the minds of the great Numbers who dislike it in its present form. The Amendments I wish are not numerous;—many proposed by the different Conventions appear of but little Consequence, yet some are important and must be Acceded to if ever the Government sits easy. From this State of the matter, wishing amendmts. as I do, you will readily conclude I anxiously wish every state may come into the adoption in order to effect a measure with me so desireable; in which case, from the general current of amendments proposed, we shall retain all the important parts in which New Jersey is interested.

To your quere about our paper money, I dare not venture a Conjecture what effect the new Government will have upon it: I Suppose, however, no interference will be had in that or any Law now in force so far as respects Citizens of the same State. In Continental affairs, and between Citizens of different States I Suppose the case will be otherwise. our paper probably will not then be received in the Treasury of the United States, or in our State by Citizens of another State, in which Cases it will cease to be a legal tender.

As to the Arrears of Taxes payable to the Continental Receiver, I believe our paper will readily be received: The difficulty of obtaining money from the exhausted state of our finances makes our money, notwithstanding the loss sustained upon it, eagerly sought after; I know public Creditors are anxious to Obtain orders on our Loan officers when they can hear he hath any of our paper on hand; large orders have been given upon him which the holders Accepted in expectation of receiving paper only: As to Specie they know at present none is expected.

If any remedy is applied to our paper money it must come through our Legislature: I believe it would have a good effect if the Interest and such of the principle as may be paid in was destroyed, and the amount of the Interest raised by taxes.

It is said the Speaker is about calling our Legislature on account of the Adoption of the New Constitution; this is altogether unnecessary as the New Congress will not be convened before February, the Situation of several States require such a distant time; the Usual time of meeting in October will be soon enough to make the necessary provision for appointing officers &c.

We have been some time in Suspense about the event of the New Constitution in this State; The Accounts of last evening were that the Convention had Adjourned to a future day; if that is the Case they mean at next meeting to adopt it. before I seal this I may likely hear whether the above report is true or not.

P.S. I cannot find that the Acct. of the Conventions Adjourning is Supported by any good Authority.

1. John Story had been in New York City seeking compensation from Congress for his services during and after the American Revolution. In March 1788 Congress rejected one claim, but in September 1788 it approved some compensation.

2. In late September 1787 Clark took an active part in the debate in Congress over the manner in which the Constitution should be submitted to the states. In the end, Congress adopted his proposal that it be submitted without approbation or censure.

3. The Massachusetts Convention was the first to propose recommendatory amendments on 6 February 1788.

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