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REMARKS on the Amendments to the Federal Constitution, proposed by the Conventions of Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, New-York, Virginia, South and North-Carolina, with the minorities of Pennsylvania and Maryland, by a FOREIGN SPECTATOR.

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By the third paragraph, second section, first article of the Federal Constitution: "Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states, which may be included within the union, according to their respective numbers. The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each state shall have at least one representative."

The conventions of New-York, Massachusetts and New-Ham[p]shire, Virginia and North-Carolina, by the first, second and second amendment respectively, stipulate *that there shall be one representative for every thirty thousand persons, untill the whole number of representatives amounts to two hundred; after which that number shall be continued or increased, as Congress shall direct, upon the principles fixed in the constitution.*^(a) In the tenth amendment the minority of Pennsylvania request, *that the house of representatives be properly encreased in number*, and by the subsequent protest complain of the present small number as defective and dangerous.

The advocates for a numerous legislature plead, that representatives ought to have the same interests, feelings, opinions and views with the people; nor be liable to bribery and undue influence. All this may be expected from a very moderate number. If eight well chosen delegates of Pennsylvania cannot make up among them a perfect knowledge of the state, we must indeed lament such barbarous public ignorance! if five of these are bad characters, is it probable that ten in sixteen would be honest men? Large public bodies, if ill disposed, are more dangerous to liberty, because each individual is encouraged by the support of many; the combined influence of some hundred representatives by connections, property and abilities, might go very far to procure a reelection, or to secure the worst among them against any fear of punishment. As to information and fellow feeling with the represented, it must indeed extend to the parts, in order to embrace the whole; but mere knowledge of and sympathy with *one part* will make a paltry politician, and a bad trustee for *the whole*. Delegates in Congress from all the counties within the union, who should represent nothing but the interests, feelings, opinions and views of the respective counties, would make sad work indeed! They would I believe be the *last Congress* of

the United States. To speak with precision—Every delegate is a representative of the whole federal republic; he ought to understand and promote its interest: more especially he represents his own state; he should be perfectly acquainted with all its concerns, and faithfully guard its federal rights: as to [counties], towns or particular classes of citizens, they are to him only ingredients of the general mass that forms the state.

Whenever experience or only public opinion shall render a larger representation necessary, Congress has the constitutional power to increase it in the proportion of 1 for 30,000. But to fix this ratio invariably at present might hereafter prove a disadvantage. Besides what mystic virtue is there in the number 200, that Congress may after that have the discretionary power of representing for example 60,000 persons by one, which in a rapid population may soon be the case? If a numerous representation is deemed a barrier against encroachment of the federal power, it will be more necessary when this power shall arrive to maturity, and shall by the increase of national wealth have greater means of corruption.

A good choice of counsellors is of more consequence than a multitude of them. Economy will also be no trifling object in this country, while the people pay taxes with so much reluctance.^(b)

The minority of Pennsylvania demand, *that elections of representatives be annual*, tenth amendment. To this I need only reply, that none of those gentlemen would probably at present make such a proposition. New members will find the affairs of a great empire an arduous task even for great abilities. Many persons well qualified to serve their country could not for so short a term derange their private concerns; especially those in the remoter parts of the continent.

The convention of New-York propose, *That the legislatures of the respective states may make provision by law, that the electors of the election districts, to be by them appointed, shall choose a citizen of the United States, who shall have been an inhabitant of such district, for the term of one year, immediately preceding the time of his election, for one of the representatives of such state*, 32 amendment.

In the last number I endeavored to prove that Congress has a constitutional right of regulating elections in the last resort. We have just observed that federal delegates represent the states but not particular districts. The liberty of choosing among the best men through the state will probably effect a good representation. Worthy characters will find a natural predilection where they are best known. If we must at all suppose a rivalry between the federal government and that of a state, let them both have fair play, and an equal chance for popularity. Whatever may be the advantage of either mode, will be known by a fair experiment, which must be a sufficient reason to postpone the amendment.

(a) *For the sake of brevity an exact literal quotation is immaterial.*

(b) *I do not mean that the present number of sixty five should continue,¹ but that the proportion of one for thirty-five or forty thousand may be very safe: even this will soon produce a hundred representatives.*

1. Article I, section 2 of the Constitution apportioned sixty-five members of the U.S. House of Representatives among the thirteen states.

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