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(Roger Sherman) Essays

## A Countryman III

*New Haven Gazette*, 29 November 1787

*To the PEOPLE of Connecticut.*

The same thing once more.—I am a plain man, of few words; for this reason perhaps it is, that when I have said a thing I love to repeat it. Last week I endeavoured to evince, that the only surety you could have for your liberties must be in the nature of your government; that you could derive no security from bills of rights, or stipulations, on the subject of a standing army, the liberty of the press, trial by jury, or on any other subject. Did you ever hear of an absolute monarchy, where those rights which are proposed by the pigmy politicians of this day, to be secured by stipulation, were ever preserved? Would it not be mere trifling to make any such stipulations, in any absolute monarchy?

On the other hand, if your interest and that of your rulers are the same, your liberties are abundantly secure. Perhaps the most secure when their power is most compleat. Perhaps a provision that they should never raise troops in time of peace, might at some period embarrass the public concerns and endanger the liberties of the people. It is possible that in the infinite variety of events, it might become improper strictly to adhere to any one provision that has ever been proposed to be stipulated. At all events, the people have always been perfectly safe without any stipulation of the kind, when the rulers were interested to make them safe; and never otherwise.

No people can be more secure against tyranny and oppression in their rulers than you are at present; and no rulers can have more supreme and unlimited authority than your general assembly have.

When you consult on the subject of adopting the new constitution, you do not enquire whether the powers therein contained can be safely lodged in any hands whatever. For not only those very powers, but all other powers are already in the general assembly.—The enquiry is, whether Congress is by this new constitution so formed that a part of the power now in the general assembly would be as well lodged in Congress. Or, as was before said, it depends on how Congress is formed; how far the Members are under your controul; and how far their interest and yours are the same; to which careful attention must be given.

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