

## **Andrew Allen to Tench Coxe London, 8 September 1788 (excerpt)**

I find by the last Accounts from America that ten States have at length agreed to adopt the new Fœderal Constitution & therefore take it for granted it will be generally received as the remaining three States must I think of Necessity come in. I am really glad of it, as the good Effects it is likely to introduce will be probably felt not only by those immediately within it's Sphere, but by every Country communicating with America & particularly by that in which I am peculiarly interested. Though the Consequences arising from this System may not in my View be so extensive as the sanguine Expectations on your Side of the Water paint them, they must nevertheless be greatly beneficial by giving Unity to the different & otherwise discordant Interests of the States, establishing a Government with a Degree of Vigor & Energy, more at Liberty to form & carry into Execution plans for the general Good, & less liable to be thwarted or controuled in their Operations by the narrow & partial Schemes of factious Demagogues. Law & Justice will therefore probably have a freer Course, & consequently a greater Respect & Veneration for Authority must prevail, which by affording Security to Persons & Property must greatly increase the Industry & productive Powers of the Country. These appear to me the Effects most likely to flow from the new System which are & for a Time must be confined to the internal Interests of America. With respect to it's immediate Operation externally by extending Commerce or opening new Channels of Trade, I must confess, that I can not perceive the Grounds on which the sanguine Ideas of it's Advocates are founded. These are Consequences more remote & are only to be brought about by gradual & progressive Industry and can never be forced by all the Art of Man further than the Circumstances of the Country naturally fits it for their Reception. Upon these Principles I am of Opinion that the Inhabitants of America are premature in their grand Ideas of extensive Commerce & flourishing Manufacturers, and that their Attempts to effectuate these suddenly will not only end in Disappointment, but will depress them below the Level that a proper Application of their Powers would naturally raise them to. In a Country whose Capital Stock is small & limited, great Care should be taken that none of it be diverted from those Branches of Industry most essential to the Subsistence of the Inhabitants & most productive: & it is not till these be supplied to overflowing, that the Surplus can otherwise be advantageously employed. Agriculture is this first & most necessary Branch & in a Country like America where the whole Profits go immediately into the Pockets of the farmer, without being diminished by the Payment of heavy Rents as in Europe, must be infinitely the most productive. [This?] therefore should be it's principal Object, without further Attention to Commerce than merely to provide a Market for the Excess of it's Produce beyond it's internal Consumption, & also to procure the foreign Necessaries it requires at the lowest Price. As to aiming at Manufactures (a few bulky or family ones excepted) the Project seems as destructive as ridiculous in the present State of Things. The same Quantity of Stock & Labor applied to Agriculture will produce twice or thrice the Returns of Profit, which could be made by diverting it to Manufactures, whilst these are to enter into Competition with those of European Production—The Moiety therefore will be sufficient for the Purchase of these Commodities & the other Moiety will be accumulated to the Stock of the Country. But you may perhaps reply to this "I admit your Argument, but necessity not Choice obliges us to turn

ourselves to Manufactures as we are not able to purchase those of Europe we stand in need of." My Answer is, apply your force to Agriculture improve your System of Cultivation & your Produce will daily encrease & enlarge your Means of purchasing the Goods of others; acquire habits of Economy, consume less as well as Goods of inferior Quality & the Complaint will cease: but it would be an absurd Remedy for your present Wants to diminish your Income, which must inevitably be affected by diverting your [Course?] from more to less productive Branches of Industry. These are the general Outlines of my Ideas of the real Interests of the united States, which might be supported by many Arguments, which though too voluminous for the Bounds of a Letter will probably suggest themselves to you....

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