

Salem Mercury, 7 August 1787

It is said, the Federal Convention have unanimously agreed on a scheme of Continental Government, adapted to the circumstances, habits and necessities of the people, and which will speedily be presented to the several legislatures, for their acceptance and ratification. The principal difficulty will now be, to have it freely adopted by the people: And on this account we should have nothing to apprehend, were it not, that some people, for some reason or another, have started objections to giving any power out of their hands, as they term it, lest the liberties of the people be endangered. It hath unhappily been the case, when measures have been proposed, in the Assemblies of the States, evidently calculated for the benefit of individual and confederate States, for some to mount the political hobby-horse, and set up the cry of—Liberty! On these occasions, we frequently hear of our forefathers coming to this howling wilderness for liberty—and if we grant money or power to Congress, our liberties will be in danger—that Congress are profuse, &c—It is undoubtedly the duty of a free people to be tenacious of their liberties, and guard against encroachment—But does it follow, that we should be suspicious of every publick measure, or publick character? The suggestions, that it would be dangerous to grant money or power to Congress—or to establish a national government adequate to the national purposes—are unmanly and unreasonable, yet they have their effect on minds naturally suspicious and timid, and those unenlarged; whereby many men, of illiberal sentiments, base and selfish views, and also of weak intellects, draw a train after them like a comet. In the insinuations which are frequently made use of, there is not only a great share of illiberality, but also a great degree of puerility. Let me have your knife, says Tommy to Billy: No, says Billy—you will cut your fingers if I do, and I can make a whistle as well again as you can.—Whether there is more reason in one case than in the other, is submitted.

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