

Comte de Moustier to Comte de Montmorin New York, 11 May 1788

The Maryland Convention has adopted the new Constitution, which brings to seven the number of States that have accepted it. It is probable that henceforth, in imitation of Massachusetts and Maryland, some modifications (*amendments*) will be proposed. But if the required number ratify the Constitution, the new Government will nevertheless be established, and the new Congress will decide on the amendments that are appropriate to affix to the Constitution. Public attention is focused today on the States of Newyork and Virginia. Federalists flatter themselves that, because of the success of the elections to make up the individual Conventions of these States, they will follow the example of the 7 that have adopted the Constitution. Moreover, they are counting on at least two of the three other States that have yet to decide, namely, the two Carolinas and Newhampshire. As for the State of Rhodeisland, it rejected the Constitution by means of its Town meetings, where the wisest men of that State have refused to appear; but it is so weak by itself that if it remains alone in its opposition, it will either be forced to adhere to it or it will be broken up and incorporated into the States of Massachusetts and Connecticut. It is spoken of today only with contempt and derision.

It is difficult to know the Leaders of the Antifederalists, only a very small number of whom openly declare themselves, which could even lead one to presume that they do not dare depend too much on their strength. The partisans of the new Constitution, who are better known, plan together, show themselves, act, and hold their course. But when they have obtained the objective that they pursue today and victory is assured them, there will still be great difficulties to overcome in order to execute it. The main problem will always be to raise a public revenue in a country where, with the exception of some cities, all the inhabitants are dispersed and in general hardly disposed to contribute to the public expense. It is extremely important not to frighten them in the beginning, in order not to incite them to emigrate, to which they are only too disposed by hopes of improving their lot. Americans in general are little attached to the soil on which they were born, and it pains them little to distance themselves forever from all the things that elsewhere attach men to one place in preference to another.

The emigrations ought nevertheless to abate, if the difficulties and dangers could counterbalance the restless spirit and the greediness of men. The savages seem more disposed than ever to defend their possessions. Reports are received from different areas of their incursions and of their successes. They have recently attacked two boats traveling down the Ohio to reach Kentucky. Several Frenchmen were aboard one of these boats; two were victims of their enthusiasm for the sciences; one was a Botanist and the other a Mineralogist; it was not at all part of their plan to settle down in this savage and faraway country. It is alarming to see such hostile tendencies in the savages just when Congress is ready to begin Conferences with them to assure peace. It is feared that they are being incited by the Government of Canada. The Americans are much inclined to believe that the Savages would not be able, without foreign help, either to form plans of attack or to resist. It is for this reason that they presume that the Creeks are being incited and supported by the Government of Louisiana. Be that as it may, this savage nation is becoming very formidable to the Georgians who fear even for Savannah. The

Creeks are led by a Scot named MacGillivray, whose possessions were confiscated by the State of Georgia, which has already offered to return them to him, along with some added concessions. His situation seems to him preferable to what he could hope for in Georgia. He manages all the Commerce of the Creeks with the Spanish, he possesses large tracts of land, numerous troops, comfortable dwellings, where he keeps some women, has a Library, and even has a company of musicians for himself. He has accustomed the Creeks to organize regular attacks and to stand fast, contrary to Savage custom. He has armed them well and makes them fight on foot and on horseback. If all the Savage nations that still find themselves within the territorial limits claimed by the United States had similar leaders, the Americans could not consider themselves masters for a long time.

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