

THE STATE GAZETTE

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Edenton, Nov. 12, 1787.

WE, the Grand Jury for the district of Edenton, considering the present as a very important crisis in the affairs of America, and being deeply sensible of the necessity of a firm and lasting union among the American states, to ensure the common safety and liberty of all, hope it will not be deemed presuming in us, that we take this occasion to express our sentiments on the subject of the new constitution, proposed by the late respectable Convention. We believe none can be so ignorant as not to know, and we hope few are so unfeeling as not to regret, the disordered and distracted state in which the affairs of the union have been for a long time past. No sooner was the danger of a common enemy removed, than the states immediately detached themselves from the general concerns of the whole, as if our future fate was out of the power of fortune. The consequence has been, our public debts unpaid, the treaty of peace unfulfilled on both sides, our commerce at the very verge of ruin, and all private industry at a stand, for want of an united vigorous government. Quotas demanded which we can never pay, and Congress preserving merely the shadow of authority without possessing one substantial property of power. These evils dictated the necessity of a change, and the same happy expedient of an union of counsels which formed the confederation, was adopted to remedy its defects. Experience had pointed these out, and we believe it would be difficult to find any other persons appointed on this important occasion. They were not only able men, but entitled to the highest confidence which can be bestowed by any people upon illustrious and successful leaders; and the same patriotism of character which formerly distinguished so many of them in the most trying scenes, was visible in the anxious and deep attention they employed on this momentous subject. A work coming from such men, after such long deliberation, is entitled to the utmost respect; especially as all the states assembled were unanimous, a circumstance that strongly shews the purity of their intentions, their sense of the absolute necessity that a new constitution should be immediately formed, and that little subordinate attentions to local interests ought to give way to the great object of the general good. There is nothing we hold in greater disdain, nor is there any thing more inconsistent with common prudence, as well as the most ordinary share of public spirit, than that we should cavil about trifles when our all is at stake, that we should slight the present favourable opportunity, which may be the only one we may ever enjoy, to establish a free and energetic government, when we now lie at the mercy of the most inconsiderable enemy, and have an union in nothing but in name. We admire in the new constitution a proper jealousy of liberty mixed with a due regard to the necessity of a strong authoritative government. Such a one is as requisite for a confederated, as for a single government, since it would not be more ridiculous or futile for our own Assembly to depend for a sanction to its laws on an unanimous concurrence of all the counties in the state, than for Congress to depend for any necessary exertion of power on the unanimous concurrence of all the states in the union. One weak, corrupted, or unprincipled state might in such a case destroy the whole. This evil, the effect of which we have already felt, is, in our opinion, happily remedied by the constitution proposed, with an advantageous addition of a popular representative of the people at large, ac-

companied with useful checks to guard against possible abuses. It is also a part of the constitution that we observe with particular pleasure, that nine states may at any time make alterations, so that any changes which experience may point out can be made without the danger of such calamities as are incident upon changes of government in all other countries, where they can be only brought about by a civil war. Nor can we avoid dwelling with delight upon those many provisions, calculated to make us as much one people as possible, and to impress upon the minds of all that useful and important truth, that our strength consists in union, and nothing can hurt us but division. May this great truth, so important for us, so formidable to our enemies, rest upon the minds of all well-wishers to their country, as the watch-word of American liberty and safety! The various attempts that were made to divide us during the war, and the danger of similar efforts being used on the present occasion to make us distrust our best and ablest characters, ought to put us upon our guard, that we may not suffer ourselves to be the dupes of an insidious policy working for our destruction. But we trust in God, that the same all-powerful providence, which has hitherto so wonderfully preserved us, will still continue to protect us from the machinations of all our enemies, internal and external, and that by a wise use of the vast advantages in our possession, this country may become, as it seems destined to be, a refuge for all the oppressed upon the globe.

Entertaining these sentiments, which the warmth of our feelings hath carried to a greater length than we intended, we most earnestly wish that the General Assembly may appoint the meeting of a Convention on as early a day as possible, that no reproach of unnecessary delay may lie on us, when, in all human probability, upon our speedy adoption or rejection of this constitution it may depend, whether we shall be truly a nation, happy in ourselves, and respected by the rest of mankind; or an inconsiderable scattered people, perpetually driving to and fro, in search of a perfection which never can be found, amusing ourselves with visionary ideas when we might be enjoying real blessings, and at length doomed to feel the curse of all human discontent, the consciousness that by rejecting the means providence had put into our power, we had become both wretched and contemptible.

Wm. Bennet, Forem.	John Brocket,
Chris. Clark,	James Rajcoe,
Tho. Taylor,	Luke Lewis,
Jonathan Frizel,	James Wood,
Abraham Norfleet,	Robert Gray,
Wm. Righton,	Edward Moore,
Foster Toms,	Joseph Perry,
Joseph Horne,	Henry Hill,
Roger Boyd,	Benjamin Cook.

At a meeting of a respectable number of Inhabitants for the county of Chowan, and the Town of Edenton, at the Court-House in Edenton, on the 8th day of November, 1787, pursuant to an advertisement from their Representatives in the General Assembly.

THOMAS BENBURY, Esq. Chairman.
The following resolutions were unanimously agreed to.

Resolved,

THAT in the opinion of this Meeting, this state can have no prospect either of security or honor, but by a firm and indissoluble union with the other states in the Confederation.

That the benefits derived from union were most remarkably and providentially displayed by the glorious and successful termination of a war, in which we were for a long time very unequally engaged, and have been no less apparent from the state of anarchy, distress and dishonor, to which we have been exposed since the peace for want of a continental government of sufficient energy to answer all the purposes for which our Confederation can be of any real use to us.

That in our present situation, Congress being without either money, credit or resources, (for the voluntary and unanimous concurrence of thirteen states in any one measure, we are now convinced, is a futile dependence) it is full time, if we mean to be a united people, to establish such a government as can keep us together, otherwise that independence which we have obtained so hardily, and prize so much, will pass away like a shadow, and we shall be numbered among the visionary and unhappy of mankind.

That such being our situation, and when we had almost despaired of any material and honorable change, we view with admiration and gratitude, a system formed by the unanimous concurrence of twelve states, which magnanimously disdaining petty competitions of local and private interests, embraced with patriotic ardour, the great object of an united Government, calculated, (to use their own excellent words) to establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, and secure the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty.

That amidst other circumstances which fill our hearts with joy on this important occasion, we cannot consider with indifference the distinguished part which our immortal General has taken in this great work, calculated to complete the happiness of which he laid the foundation, and we consider it as an act of Providence for which we ought to be particularly thankful that he extended to so late a period the valuable life of that venerable man, Dr. Franklin, whose wisdom, fortitude and perseverance had so great a share in establishing the peace and independence of our country.

That it is in vain for us to expect for any able assistance than that given by those and other illustrious characters in the late Convention, whose deliberations appear to have been conducted with a degree of temper and assiduity, suited to the difficult task they were engaged in, and therefore we think every hour of delay in carrying their propositions into effect is unnecessary for any good purpose, and by continuing the present evils of imbecility, anarchy and national dishonor, may endanger the loss of all those blessings, for the sake of which any government can be of the least use, and a free government must be of the greatest.

Resolved therefore, That this meeting do earnestly desire that their members for this town and county, do use their utmost efforts to obtain a resolution of the General Assembly, appointing the choice and meeting of representatives of the people, in a Convention, pursuant to the recommendation of the late Convention held at Philadelphia, in order to deliberate on the new Constitution proposed, and that the time of holding the said Convention be appointed on as early a day as possible.

Resolved also, That this meeting entertain a very grateful sense of the eminent services rendered to this state by its Delegates in the late Convention; and are in particular obliged to