

tion that the general sentiment in the Eastern and Middle States is friendly to the proposed system at this time.

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

New York, October 24, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

When the plan of the Constitution proposed by the Convention came before Congress for their sanction, a very serious effort was made by R. H. Lee and Mr. Dane, from Massachusetts, to embarrass it. It was first contended, that Congress could not properly give any positive countenance to a measure which had for its object the subversion of the Constitution under which they acted. This ground of attack failing, the former gentleman urged the expediency of sending out the plan with amendments, and proposed a number of them corresponding with the objections of Col. Māson. This experiment had still less effect. In order, however, to obtain unanimity, it was necessary to couch the resolution in very moderate terms.

Mr. Adams has received permission to return, with thanks for his services. No provision is made for supplying his place, or keeping up any representation there. Your reappointment for three years will be notified from the office of foreign affairs. It was made without a negative, eight States being present. Connecticut, notwithstanding, put in a blank ticket, the sense of that State having been declared against embassies. Massa-

chusetts betrayed some scruple on like ground. Every personal consideration was avowed, and I believe with sincerity, to have militated against these scruples. It seems to be understood that letters to and from the foreign ministers of the United States are not free of postage; but that the charge is to be allowed in their accounts.

The exchange of our French for Dutch creditors has not been countenanced either by Congress or the Treasury Board. The paragraph in your last letter to Mr. Jay, on the subject of applying a loan in Holland to the discharge of the pay due to the foreign officers, has been referred to the Board since my arrival here. No report has yet been made. But I have little idea that the proposition will be adopted. Such is the state and prospect of our fiscal department, that any new loan, however small, that should now be made, would probably subject us to the reproach of premeditated deception. The balance of Mr. Adams's last loan will be wanted for the interest due in Holland, and, with all the income here, will, it is feared, not save our credit in Europe from farther wounds. It may well be doubted whether the present Government can be kept alive during the ensuing year, or until the new one may take its place.

Upwards of one hundred thousand acres of the lands of the United States have been disposed of in open market. Five millions of unsurveyed have been sold by private contract to a New England company, at two-thirds of a dollar per acre, payment to be made in the principal of the public securities. A negotiation is nearly closed with a New

Jersey company for two millions more on like terms, and another commenced with a company of this city for four millions.¹⁴

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

New York, Oct. 28, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

The mail of yesterday brought me your favor of the twenty-second instant. The communications from Richmond give me as much pleasure as they exceed my expectations. As I find by a letter from a member of the Assembly, however, that Col. Mason has not got down, and it appears that Mr. Henry is not at bottom a friend, I am not without fears that the combined influence and management may yet create difficulties. There is one consideration which I think ought to have some weight in the case, over and above the intrinsic inducements to embrace the Constitution, and which I have suggested to some of my correspondents. There is at present a very strong probability that nine States at least will pretty speedily concur in establishing it, What will become of the tardy remainder? They must be either left, as outcasts from the society, to shift for themselves, or be compelled to come in, or must come in of themselves when they will be allowed no credit for it. Can either of these situations be as eligible as a prompt and manly determination to support the Union, and share its common fortunes?

My last stated pretty fully the information which had arrived here from different quarters, concerning