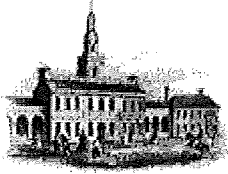


THE FOUNDERS' CONSTITUTION



Amendment X

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Document 8**James Monroe, Views of the President of the United States on the Subject of Internal Improvements**4 May 1822 *Richardson 2:152--55*

Having presented above a full view of all the powers granted to the United States, it will be proper to look to those remaining to the States. It is by fixing the great powers which are admitted to belong to each government that we may hope to come to a right conclusion respecting those in controversy between them. In regard to the National Government, this task was easy because its powers were to be found in specific grants in the Constitution; but it is more difficult to give a detail of the powers of the State governments, as their constitutions, containing all powers granted by the people not specifically taken from them by grants to the United States, can not well be enumerated. Fortunately, a precise detail of all the powers remaining to the State governments is not necessary in the present instance. A knowledge of their great powers only will answer every purpose contemplated, and respecting these there can be no diversity in opinion. They are sufficiently recognized and established by the Constitution of the United States itself. In designating the important powers of the State governments it is proper to observe, first, that the territory contemplated by the Constitution belongs to each State in its separate character and not to the United States in their aggregate character. Each State holds territory according to its original charter, except in cases where cessions have been made to the United States by individual States. The United States had none when the Constitution was adopted which had not been thus ceded to them and which they held on the conditions on which such cession had been made. Within the individual States it is believed that they held not a single acre; but if they did it was as citizens held it, merely as private property. The territory acquired by cession lying without the individual States rests on a different principle, and is provided for by a separate and distinct part of the Constitution. It is the territory within the individual States to which the Constitution in its great principles applies, and it applies to such territory as the territory of a State and not as that of the United States. The next circumstance to be attended to is that the people composing this Union are the people of the several States, and not of the United States in the full sense of a consolidated government. The militia are the militia of the several

States; lands are held under the laws of the States; descents, contracts, and all the concerns of private property, the administration of justice, and the whole criminal code, except in the cases of breaches of the laws of the United States made under and in conformity with the powers vested in Congress and of the laws of nations, are regulated by State laws. This enumeration shows the great extent of the powers of the State governments. The territory and the people form the basis on which all governments are founded. The militia constitutes their effective force. The regulation and protection of property and of personal liberty are also among the highest attributes of sovereignty. This, without other evidence, is sufficient to show that the great office of the Constitution of the United States is to unite the States together under a Government endowed with powers adequate to the purposes of its institution, relating, directly or indirectly, to foreign concerns, to the discharge of which a National Government thus formed alone could be competent.

This view of the exclusive jurisdiction of the several States over the territory within their respective limits, except in cases otherwise specially provided for, is supported by the obvious intent of the several powers granted to Congress, to which a more particular attention is now due. Of these the right to declare war is perhaps the most important, as well by the consequences attending war as by the other powers granted in aid of it. The right to lay taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, though necessary for the support of the civil government, is equally necessary to sustain the charges of war; the right to raise and support armies and a navy and to call forth and govern the militia when in the service of the United States are altogether of the latter kind. They are granted in aid of the power to make war and intended to give effect to it. These several powers are of great force and extent, and operate more directly within the limits and upon the resources of the States than any of the other powers. But still they are means only for given ends. War is declared and must be maintained, an army and a navy must be raised, fortifications must be erected for the common defense, debts must be paid. For these purposes duties, imposts, and excises are levied, taxes are laid, the lands, merchandise, and other property of the citizens are liable for them; if the money is not paid, seizures are made and the lands are sold. The transaction is terminated; the lands pass into other hands, who hold them, as the former proprietors did, under the laws of the individual States. They were means only to certain ends; the United States have nothing further to do with them. The same view is applicable to the power of the General Government over persons. The militia is called into the service of the United States; the service is performed; the corps returns to the State to which it belongs; it is the militia of such State, and not of the United States. Soldiers are required for the Army, who may be obtained by voluntary enlistment or by some other process founded in the principles of equality. In either case the citizen after the tour of duty is performed is restored to his former station in society, with his equal share in the common sovereignty of the nation. In all these cases, which are the strongest which can be given, we see that the right of the General Government is nothing more than what it is called in the Constitution, a power to perform certain acts, and that the subject on which it operates is a

means only to that end; that it was both before and after that act under the protection and subject to the laws of the individual State within which it was.

To the other powers of the General Government the same remarks are applicable and with greater force. The right to regulate commerce with foreign powers was necessary as well to enable Congress to lay and collect duties and imposts as to support the rights of the nation in the intercourse with foreign powers. It is executed at the ports of the several States and operates almost altogether externally. The right to borrow and coin money and to fix its value and that of foreign coin are important to the establishment of a National Government, and particularly necessary in support of the right to declare war, as, indeed, may be considered the right to punish piracy and felonies on the high seas and offenses against the laws of nations. The right to establish an uniform rule of naturalization and uniform laws respecting bankruptcies seems to be essentially connected with the right to regulate commerce. The first branch of it relates to foreigners entering the country; the second to merchants who have failed. The right to promote the progress of useful arts and sciences may be executed without touching any of the individual States. It is accomplished by granting patents to inventors and preserving models, which may be done exclusively within the Federal district. The right to constitute courts inferior to the Supreme Court was a necessary consequence of the judiciary existing as a separate branch of the General Government. Without such inferior court in every State it would be difficult and might even be impossible to carry into effect the laws of the General Government. The right to establish post-offices and post-roads is essentially of the same character. For political, commercial, and social purposes it was important that it should be vested in the General Government. As a mere matter of regulation, and nothing more, I presume, was intended by it, it is a power easily executed and involving little authority within the States individually. The right to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever over the Federal district and over forts, magazines, arsenals, dockyards, and other needful buildings with the consent of the State within which the same may be is a power of a peculiar character, and is sufficient in itself to confirm what has been said of all the other powers of the General Government. Of this particular grant further notice will hereafter be taken.

I shall conclude my remarks on this part of the subject by observing that the view which has been presented of the powers and character of the two Governments is supported by the marked difference which is observable in the manner of their endowment. The State governments are divided into three branches--a legislative, executive, and judiciary--and the appropriate duties of each assigned to it without any limitation of power except such as is necessary to guard against abuse, in the form of bills of right. But in instituting the National Government an entirely different principle was adopted and pursued. The Government itself is organized, like the State governments, into three branches, but its powers are enumerated and defined in the most precise form. The subject has already been too fully explained to require illustration by a general view of the whole Constitution, every

part of which affords proof of what is here advanced. It will be sufficient to advert to the eighth section of the first article, being that more particularly which defines the powers and fixes the character of the Government of the United States. By this section it is declared that Congress shall have power, first, to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, etc.

Having shown the origin of the State governments and their endowments when first formed; having also shown the origin of the National Government and the powers vested in it, and having shown, lastly, the powers which are admitted to have remained to the State governments after those which were taken from them by the National Government, I will now proceed to examine whether the power to adopt and execute a system of internal improvement by roads and canals has been vested in the United States.

The Founders' Constitution

Volume 5, Amendment X, Document 8

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The University of Chicago Press

Richardson, James D., comp. *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789--1897*. 10 vols. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896--99.



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