



To the Citizens of Portland.

YOU are *this day* called to decide the interesting and important question, whether you will continue your connexion with the great, powerful, and respectable State of Massachusetts, and preserve your civil, literary, and religious privileges; or, for the purpose of assuming the mere name of independence, put all those privileges in jeopardy, and take upon you this burden of supporting a separate Government.

It is a question which deeply interests the present generation, and posterity. On its decision the fate of Maine depends. We are responsible to our consciences, and our maker for a faithful discharge of our duty on this occasion.

When a great revolution is to be accomplished, it is natural to enquire, What shall we gain by the contemplated change? What evils are to be redressed? What advantages secured?—No one will pretend that we have any thing to gain in this respect.

We cannot expect to enjoy a better government than that under which we now live. But if we Separate we must relinquish our present constitution, and all the venerable institutions of our ancestors, without knowing what is to be substituted in their stead.

Every man of reflection must be convinced that our State taxes will be greatly increased by Separation. They will undoubtedly be doubled. Those who tell you differently intend to deceive you.

But whatever the expense of supporting the Government may be, it is certain that Portland must pay more than one nineteenth part of the whole. This is the proportion our valuation bears to all the other towns in Maine.

Should you be willing to be one of Nineteen towns, that should assume all the expense of supporting a Government for the whole of Maine?

By voting for Separation you in reality vote to tax Portland more than one nineteenth part of the whole expense of supporting the government of the new State.

It is said the money we now pay is expended in Boston, and never returns to Maine. This is not true. For the last six years there has been received from the state Treasury, and expended in Maine, more money than we have contributed to the support of Government in the same time.

Many are deceived by the hope, that Portland is to be the seat of Government. This is a most delusive hope. Examine the ground on which it rests, and a moments reflection must convince every unprejudiced mind, that we cannot be gratified in this respect.

As it respects territory, we are quite in one extreme, and the balance of population is greatly against us.

By the last census the population of York, Cumberland, and Oxford, amounted to one hundred and two thousand three hundred and forty eight, and the Eastern counties to one hundred and twenty six thousand three hundred and sixty seven; making the balance of population against us twenty three thousand and nine hundred and nineteen; and this balance is now much increased.

But this question must be settled by the Delegates in Convention. Of these the three western counties are entitled to one hundred and twenty one, and the Eastern counties to one hundred and eighty seven. So that the majority in the convention will be sixty six against us. We therefore have no rational hope that the seat of government will be at Portland.

Are the Merchants and Mechanicks of Portland willing to be severely taxed, to build up some rival town on the Kennebeck? If not, come out, and vote against Separation.

So great has been the excitement in Portland, that some, who are really and decidedly opposed to separation, have supposed that opposition would be ineffectual; but we assure such that there is no reason for despondency. Our brethren in the Country are all alive on this subject; and if we do our duty, all is yet safe. The Commonwealth will still remain united, and our invaluable institutions will be preserved. The most cheering intelligence is received from all parts of Maine.

Then let us rally round the standard of union. Let every man do his duty. And let us all remember, that it is a solemn and religious duty which we owe ourselves, our families, and our Country, to defeat this daring attempt to wrest from us our excellent Constitution, the Charter of our liberties, the Palladium of our rights. July, 26, 1819.

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Date: 1819

Description: Arguments against separation from Massachusetts