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IX.3 Other things required in the federative republic

- The Spirit of Law - Book IX. On the laws in their relations to the defensive force -

Date de mise en ligne : mardi 28 août 2018

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IX.3 Other things required in the federative republic

In the republic of Holland, one province can make no alliance without the consent of the others. This is a very good law, and even a necessary one in a federative republic. It is absent from the Germanic constitution, where it would prevent the misfortunes that can befall all its members through the imprudence, ambition, or avarice of just one. A republic which has unified itself in a political confederation has committed itself fully, and has nothing more to give.

The states that associate together are unlikely to be of the same size and to have equal strength. The republic of the Lycians [1] was an association of twenty-three cities ; the large ones had three votes in the common council ; the medium-sized ones, two ; the small ones, one. The republic of Holland is composed of seven provinces, large or small, each of which has one vote.

The cities of Lycia paid costs in proportion to the number of votes. [2] The provinces of Holland cannot follow that proportion ; they must follow that of their strength.

In Lycia, the judges and magistrates of the cities were elected by the common council, and according to the proportion we have stated. [3] In the republic of Holland, they are not elected by the common council, and each city names its own magistrates. If I were to offer a model of an excellent federative republic, I would choose the republic of Lycia.

[1] Strabo, book XIV.

[2] Strabo, book XIV.

[3] *Ibid.*