

Sidney, Albany Gazette, 24 January 1788

...When the late Convention was sitting (and under an injunction of secrecy) scarce a newspaper appeared, without a recommendation of the government in expectancy—That a government to be agreed to and countenanced by General Washington and Doctor Franklin, would be such as all good men ought to approve, and none but bad men would disapprove; and those who refused to give it their approbation, until they should have an opportunity of examining it, were treated as infidels in politics—and threatened, should they withhold their assent, to be insulted, tarred and feathered, and even in the late discussions, we meet with observations, tending to impress an opinion, that the consent of General Washington and Dr. Franklin, is not only a conclusive argument, to induce the people at large to determine in favour of the constitution, but that even to suppose they have erred or been imposed upon, is an impeachment of their understanding and integrity. A most extravagant way of reasoning. For when we calmly consider we shall find, that to err is inseparable to human nature; to be sure, to suppose that there was ever a general who understood military government better than the one, or any philosopher better acquainted with the powers of electricity than the other, would be justly reprehensible; but that they (admitting that they are not therefore the worse) should therefore be considered better, and even infallible judges of civil government (and that too, when they differ with Montesquieu, Locke, Sidney, and many other celebrated authors upon government) is inadmissible...

...But upon the start of the late convention, when they refused to be guided by their credentials (which expressly confined their powers to be *for the sole purpose of revising and amending the confederation*) and presuming to recommend to the people this new instrument, is more like the horse-hunter, who after having used every contrivance to trapan, and ensnare, has recourse to wheedling, and cajolling, he goes up to the horse, and invites him to a feast, and while he perceives that the animal is apprehensive that he will deprive him of his liberty, scratches his ears, tries to make him believe, that he will not do like other horse-hunters, and abuse him; but if he will suffer him to put on the halter, he will give the animal usage as he likes and such as will be better for him than liberty, or at the option of the animal set him at liberty again; but no sooner has he the halter well fixed, and the horse shews an inclination to disengage himself, he tells him, I have you fast now, and do what you can I shall not let you go, and you shall do what I order you, I will ride, whip, and spur you, and you shall have no more rest, or food than is sufficient to keep your skin and bones together; and when you are no longer fit to do my work, I will sell you, or if you die, I will sell your skin.

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