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A Spectator

New York Journal, 2 May 1788

MR. GREENLEAF, Six states have adopted the new Constitution; one hath rejected it,¹ and six are still to decide the important question. It appears not improbable from all the informations and accounts published by both parties, but three states of these remaining six, may reject and three adopt it. In this case the constitution will be ratified by nine states, and agreeable to the resolve of the convention, the new Congress and president may then be chosen and assemble. It is hardly to be doubted, but they will find it very difficult, and perhaps impossible, to put the new government in execution, unless they adopt the amendments already proposed by Massachusetts, and others, which may still be proposed by the remaining states. Indeed no sincere friend to this country can ever wish to see it organized and executed without amendments, for in that case it may justly be expected, that in less than twenty years it would be equally as arbitrary and despotick as that of the republic of Venice. It is however no less true, that a government for the thirteen United States, more efficient and more energetick than the present confederation, is absolutely necessary in every point of view, and it is very doubtful, and scarcely to be expected, that a new convention will ever agree upon such a mode of government, considering the local prejudices, passions, and perhaps powers and restrictions of the several legislatures, with which the members of such a new convention will be possessed. — This being admitted, every real patriot ought to exert himself to have the new government adopted and ratified by nine states, so that the new Congress might be chosen and assemble, who will undoubtedly promote such amendments as will be deemed necessary for the civil, religious and political liberty of each individual state, consistent with the good of the whole union. The four states, who will and ought to reject the constitution as it now stands, together with the powerful minority of some of these states who have adopted it, will compel the new Congress to come to such proposals, for whoever is acquainted with the manners, habits and dispositions of the people, who oppose the new government in its present form, must be sensible and convinced, that it would be nearly impossible to make them comply by force, and by these means it is to be hoped, that all the animosities, quarrels and divisions, now subsisting, would cease and die away, and harmony, concord and unanimity take place, without which this country never can be great nor formidable.

1. A reference to Rhode Island's statewide referendum held within each town on 24 March 1788 when the Constitution was overwhelmingly rejected by a vote of 2,711 to 239.

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