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Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington Boston, 9 February 1788 (excerpt)

In my last I had the pleasure of announcing to your Excellency that we had adopted the reported constitution. Nothing very material has taken place since saving what is mentioned in the enclosed paper by that you will learn what was the temper of many of those who had been in the opposition I think they discovered a candour which does them honor and promises quiet in the State. Some however will I fear sow the seeds of discontent and attempt to inflame the minds of the people in the country—They have no really [i.e., real] object as they cannot be certain it will ever pass nine State[s]¹ I hope and trust this consideration will quiet them at present when it shall have passed nine State[s] it will be too late for any one State to think of opposing it.—

Considering the great disorders which took place in this State the last winter [Shays's Rebellion], and considering the great influence the spirit which then reigned has had since upon all our operations it must be supposed that we have got through this business pretty well and considering also that when we came together a very decided majority of the convention were against adopting the constitution Every exertion will be made to inform the people & to quiet their minds. It is very fortunate for us that the Clergy are pretty generally with us they have in this State a very great influence over the people and they will contribute much to the general peace and happiness . . .

1. Article VII of the Constitution provides that nine states were sufficient to establish the new government among the ratifying states.

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