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Henry Van Schaack to Peter Van Schaack Pittsfield, Mass., 4 February 1788 (excerpts)

I wrote you on Saturday last since which one of my neighbors has returned from Boston— He left it the 30th—Every thing was then in a promising situation for the adoption of the Constitution. Governor Hancock had come to the Convention and declared himself decidedly in favor of the System, and which had an amazing influence over a great number of wavering Members—Ill health had prevented the Governors attendance in Convention before. The opposition took advantage of this and industriously reported that his Excellency was opposed to the Constitution and advised them to reject it. There is room to conjecture that the Governor would not have come out so soon if it had not been for those reports as he was *extremely* unwell at the time he went out. Capt. [Prosper] Polly told me the moment Mr Hancock had declared himself the opposition dispaired of success. Several names who were last Spring in the Interest of the Insurgents he mentioned to me (all of whom I know) had declared to him that the prospect of success was at an end. . . .

Governor Hancock attended the Convention last Wednesday and was to go again the day following to make a long Speech.¹ . . . Colo. [Jonathan] Grout and Mr [Samuel] Peckham from Petersham who both in the presence of the Capt. [Polly] declared that the Constitution would now (after Hancocks Speech) go down in spite of all opposition and gave up the matter—

1. On the afternoon of 31 January 1788 John Hancock proposed recommendatory amendments to the Constitution.

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