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Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard Boston, 20 January 1788 (excerpt)

. . . My worthy friend Judge Dana thunders like Demosthenes—he spoke on Friday with such pathetic Energy that it seemed as if his feeble frame could scarcely have supported him (for you must know he has been sick all last Summer & is but just recruited) he expressed the feelings of an honest mind wh[ich] had taken an early & decided part in ye Cause of the Country—& wished to see its labors & sufferings crowned with success—but wh[ich] would all be lost if this Constitution should be lost.—I need not add yt he was greatly admired.

R King explains every thing in a most clear & masterly manner & is of ye most eminent Service to the Cause—

I wrote you in my last that the Antifeds had miscarried in their attempt to get Gerry introduced—They renewed the attempt on Monday [14 January] & succeeded—The Vote was “that E G be requested to take a Seat in ye Ho[use] that he might answer such Questions as shd be proposed by *the Convention* (not by particular Members) relative to *matters of fact* which concerned the formation of ye Constitution”—He came on Tuesday & sat biting the head of his Cane till Friday PM.—then began an affair wh[ich] as I was present & in a situation to see & hear very particularly I will recite at large—especially as I suppose it will be differently represented—The Antifeds will say that his Mouth was stopped in order to prevent their receiving that Light & Information wh[ich] he would have given—that the Constitution may be crammed down &c &c—The facts were precisely these—On Friday PM an honest Member who I believe is a Federalist—& I believe you know him Major Fuller of Newtown—desired to know why Georgia had 3 Represent[ative]s allowed in ye new Plan & Massa 8 when in the *last* Requisition for Taxes they were assessed but 1/13 of what Massa was—One of the Antifeds desired that Mr G might answer this Question—it was put to Vote & passed in ye affirmative—Mr G *himself* then asked the President to reduce ye q[uestio]n to writing wh[ich] he did & gave it to him.—He then took a paper out of his pocket—asked which was the *last* Requisition. was told that it was in October—& was preparing to say something more—when Dana moved yt as G had the q[uestio]n in writg he might have Time to reduce his answer to writing, giving this Reason that as there were 2 Parties in ye Ho[use] his answer might otherwise be differently understood & represented—It was seconded, G acquiesced & a vote passed desiring him to take his own Time & give his Answer in writing—He delivered it Yesterday AM—it was to this Purpose yt ye mode of apportioning Taxes in Congress was by a kind of Compromise & yt Georgia had lately been increased by Migration—R K. then explained ye matter—at large & much more to every body’s

Satisfaction. This passed—The debate was on ye equality of ye Senate—Mr Strong said that G was one of ye Comte of ye genl Convention wh[ich] drew that plan—Gerry then (as he sat near ye Secy's table) took his pen & wrote for ½ an hour.—He then rose & told the Presidt yt he had been stating some facts relative to the Senate *in writing*.—Dana observed that as he came there to *answer Questions* & no Q[uestio]n respecting ye Senate had been put to him—it would be improper for him to deliver any thing until a Q[uestio]n was put—& moved yt it be put in writing if any Qu[estio]n was necessary—Then G attempted to speak—Parsons insisted to be heard first as he was a Member & G was not—he objected to ye propriety of G's speaking or offering any thing before he was called upon—One & another & another Feds & antifeds carried on ye Conversation—& tho' Wedgery drew a Q[uestio]n & ye Presidt read it—it was not voted nor put—but a desultory debate on ye propriety of G's conduct held till one oClock when the all prevailing Cry for adjournmt came & Mr G's intended Communication dropped of course—After ye adjournmt Dana & he had some very high Words—but friends interfered & took them off different ways—

Thus stood ye matter at Noon yesterday—& here I must end my Letter as tis growing late—& a friend is waiting for me—so adieu—you shall have more next week

Love to Mrs H

[P.S.] Please to send ye inclosed or its value to [Robert] Aitken—5 Dollars—

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