

## **George Washington to Marquis de Lafayette, Mount Vernon, 18 June 1788 (excerpt)**

... In a letter I wrote you a few days ago by Mr. Barlow (but which might not possibly have reached New York until after his departure) I mentioned the accession of Maryland to the proposed government and give you the state of politics, to that period.—Since which the Convention of South Carolina has ratified the Constitution by a great majority: that of this State has been setting almost three weeks and so nicely does it appear to be ballanced, that each side asserts that it has a prepondēnacy of votes in its favour. It is probable, therefore, the majority will be small, let it fall on which ever part it may; I am inclined to believe it will be in favour of the adoption. The Convention of New York and New Hampshire assemble both this week—a large proportion of members, with the Governor at their head, in the former are said to be opposed to the government in contemplation: New Hampshire it is thought will adopt it without much hesitation or delay. It is a little strange that the men of large property in [the] South, should be more afraid that the Constitution will produce an Aristocracy or a Monarchy, than the genuine democratical people of the East. Such are our actual prospects. The accession of one State more will complete the number, which by the Constitutional provision, will be sufficient in the first instance to carry the Government into effect.

And then, I expect, that many blessings will be attributed to our new government, which are now taking their rise from that industry and frugality into the practice of which the people have been forced from necessity.—I really believe that there never was so much labour and economy to be found before in the country as at the present moment. If they persist in the habits they are acquiring, the good effects will soon be distinguishable. When the people shall find themselves secure under an energetic government, when foreign nations shall be disposed to give us equal advantages in commerce from dread of retaliation, when the burdens of the war shall be in a manner done away by the sale of western lands, when the seeds of happiness which are sown here shall begin to expand themselves, and when every one (under his own vine and fig-tree) shall begin to taste the fruits of freedom—then all these blessings (for all these blessings will come) will be referred to the fostering influence of the new government. Whereas many causes will have conspired to produce them, you see I am not less enthusiastic than ever I have been, if a belief that peculiar scenes of felicity are reserved for this country, is to be denominated enthusiasm. Indeed, I do not believe that Providence has done so much for nothing. It has always been my creed that we should not be left as an awful monument to prove, “that Mankind, under the most favourable circumstances for civil liberty and happiness, are unequal to the task of Governing themselves, and therefore made for a Master.”

We have had a backward spring and summer, with more rainy and cloudy weather than almost ever has been known: still the appearance of crops in some parts of [the] country is favorable—as we may generally expect will be the case, from the difference of soil and variety of climate in so extensive a region—insomuch that, I hope, some day or another we shall become a storehouse and granary for the world. In addition to our

former channels of trade, salted provisions, butter, cheese &c. are exported, with  
propht. from the eastern States to the East Indies. In consequence of a Contract, large  
quantities of f[l]our are lately sent from Baltimore for supplying the garrison of  
Gibralter.

Cite as: *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition*,  
ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and  
Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Canonic URL: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/RNCN-03-18-02-0049>  
[accessed 12 Jan 2012]

Original source: Commentaries on the Constitution, Volume XVIII: Commentaries on the  
Constitution, No. 6