

Prime Minister George Grenville's Speech in the House of Commons, January 14, 1766

George Grenville was the Prime Minister of Britain when the Stamp Act was passed in 1765.

...That this kingdom has the sovereign, the supreme legislative power over America, is granted. It cannot be denied; and taxation is a part of that sovereign power. It is one branch of the legislation. It is, it has been exercised, over those who are not, who were never represented. It is exercised over the India Company, the merchants of London, and the proprietors of the stocks, and over great manufacturing towns. It was exercised over the county... of Chester... before they sent any representatives to parliament.

Protection and obedience are reciprocal. Great Britain protects America, America is bound to yield obedience. If not, tell me when the Americans were emancipated? When they want the protection of this kingdom, they are always ready to ask it. That protection has always been afforded to them in the most full and ample manner. The nation has run itself into an immense debt to give them this protection; and now they are called upon to contribute a small share towards the public expense...

Glossary: (in order of appearance)
Sovereign – greatest authority
Legislative – legal
Proprietors – owners
Parliament – supreme law making body in Britain
Most emancipated - freed legislative – legal
Yield - give
House of Commons – part of parliament
Ample – plenty
Debt – owing money

Bullion, John L. *A Great and Necessary Measure: George Grenville and the Genesis of the Stamp Act, 1763-1765*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982.

All definitions are either quoted or based upon Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, MA: Merriam- Webster, 1986.

Discussion Questions:

1.	What does the text say about Great Britain's control and law-making power over America? How does the author justify why taxes should be imposed on the American colonies?	
1.	<i>Virtual representation</i> is the idea that people are represented in a legislative body through representatives who act on their behalf, even if those people do not directly elect or choose these representatives themselves. How does the text address the concept of virtual representation, and what is the author's view on its application in the context of British taxation of the American colonies?	