

Resource Sheet #4

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.*

***Parliament's Right to Tax the Colonies***

. . . 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 very ready to ask it. That protection has always been afforded 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:

sovereign – greatest authority

supreme – most

legislative – legal

House of Commons – part of parliament

debt – owing money

parliament – law making body in Britain

emancipated - freed

yield - give

ample – plenty

**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.**