**John Dickinson, Letter TWO, LETTERS from a FARMER in PENNSYLVANIA, Pennsylvania Gazette, December 10, 1767,**

**“To the INHABITANTS of the BRITISH COLONIES”**

My dear COUNTRYMEN, HERE is another late [recent] act of Parliament which appears to me to be unconstitutional and as destructive to the liberty of these colonies as that mentioned in my last letter; that is, the act4 for granting the duties [import taxes] on paper, glass, &c. [etc.] THE Parliament unquestionably possesses a legal authority to regulate the trade of Great Britain and all her colonies. Such an authority is essential to the relation between a mother country and her colonies, and necessary for the common good of all. He who considers these provinces as states distinct from the British Empire has very slender notions of justice or of their interests. We are but parts of a whole, and therefore there must exist a power somewhere to preside and preserve the connection in due order. This power is lodged in the Parliament, and we are as much dependent on Great Britain as a perfectly free people can be on another.

I HAVE looked over every statute relating to these colonies, from their first settlement to this time, and I find every one of them founded on this principle, till the Stamp Act administration. All before are calculated to regulate trade and preserve or promote a mutually beneficial intercourse between the several constituent parts of the empire; and though many of them imposed duties on trade, yet those duties were always imposed with design to restrain the commerce of one part that was injurious to another, and thus to promote the general welfare. The raising of a revenue thereby was never intended. Thus the King, by his judges in his courts of justice, imposes fines, which all together amount to a very considerable sum and contribute to the support of government: But this is merely a consequence arising from restrictions that only meant to keep peace and prevent confusion; and surely a man would argue very loosely who should conclude from hence that the King has a right to levy money in general upon his subjects. Never did the British Parliament, till the period above mentioned, think of imposing duties in America FOR THE PURPOSE OF RAISING A REVENUE. . . . A FEW months after came the Stamp Act, which reciting this, proceeds in the same strange mode of expression, thus — “And whereas it is just and necessary that provision be made for RAISING A FURTHER REVENUE WITHIN YOUR MAJESTY’S DOMINIONS IN AMERICA, towards defraying the said expenses, we your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN, &c. GIVE and GRANT,” &c. as before.

THE last act, granting duties upon paper, &c. carefully pursues these modern precedents. The preamble is “Whereas it is expedient THAT A REVENUE SHOULD BE RAISED IN YOUR MAJESTY’S DOMINIONS IN AMERICA, for making a more certain and adequate provision for defraying the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government in such provinces where it shall be found necessary, and towards the further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting and securing the said dominions, we your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN, &c. GIVE and GRANT,” &c. as before. HERE we may observe an authority expressly claimed and exerted to impose duties on these colonies, not for the regulation of trade, not for the preservation or promotion of a mutually beneficial intercourse between the several constituent parts of the empire, heretofore the sole objects of parliamentary institutions, but for the single purpose of levying money upon us. THIS I call an innovation,\* and a most dangerous innovation.

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