The Townshend Revenue Act

Taxes on glass, paint, oil, lead, paper, and tea were applied with the design of raising £40,000 a year for the administration of the colonies. The result was the resurrection of colonial hostilities created by the Stamp Act.

Reaction assumed revolutionary proportions in Boston, in the summer of 1768, when customs officials impounded a sloop owned by John Hancock, for violations of the trade regulations. Crowds mobbed the customs office, forcing the officials to retire to a British Warship in the Harbor. Troops from England and Nova Scotia marched in to occupy Boston on October 1, 1768. Bostonians offered no resistance. Rather they changed their tactics. They established *non-importation* agreements that quickly spread throughout the colonies. British trade soon dried up and the powerful merchants of Britain once again interceded on behalf of the colonies.

Directions: Read the Townshend Revenue Act and answer the following questions:

1. What is meant by the phrase “ prevent the clandestine running of goods…”
2. When was the law supposed to go into effect?
3. What goods were targeted for taxation?
4. In section IV, there is a statement that clarifies how the money raised from these taxes will go. What does it specify?
5. In section V, there is a brief mentioned about the funding of what government?
6. Section X talks about how the British are going to enforce this law.

What does it say?

**THE TOWNSHEND REVENUE ACT**

**June 29, 1767**

AN ACT for granting certain duties in the British *colonies and plantations in* America*; and for more effectually preventing the clandestine running of goods in the said colonies and plantations.*

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 as it shall be found necessary; and towards further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting and securing the said dominions*; ... be it enacted.... That from and after the twentieth day of November, one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven, there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid, unto his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, for upon and the respective Goods here in after mentioned; that is to say,

* For every hundred weight of plate, flint, and white glass, four shillings and eight pence.
* For every hundred weight of red lead, two shillings.
* For every hundred weight of green glass, one shilling and two pence.
* For every hundred weight of white lead, two shillings.
* For every hundred weight of painters colours, two shillings.
* For every pound weight of tea, three pence.
* For every ream of paper*,* twelve shillings. ..

**IV**

...and that all the monies that shall arise by the said duties (except the necessary charges of raising, collecting, levying, recovering, answering, paying, and accounting for the same) shall be applied, in the first place, in such manner as is herein after mentioned, in making a more certain and adequate provision for the charge of the administration of justice, and the support of civil government in such of the said colonies and plantations where it shall be found necessary; and that the residue of such duties shall be payed into the receipt of his Majesty's exchequer, and shall be entered separate and apart from all other monies paid or payable to his Majesty ...; and shall be there reserved, to be from time to time disposed of by parliament towards defraying the necessary expense of defending, protecting, and securing, the *British* colonies and plantations in *America.*

**V**

And be it further enacted ..., That his Majesty shall be empowered to cause such monies to be applied, out of the produce of the duties granted by this act, for defraying the charges of the administration of justice, and the support of the civil government, within all or any of the said colonies or plantations....

**X**

…From and after the said twentieth day of November, one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven, such writs of assistance, to authorize and empower the officers of his Majesty's customs to enter and go into any house, warehouse, shop, cellar, or other place, in the *British* colonies or plantations in *America,* to search for and seize prohibited goods, shall and may be granted by the said superior or supreme court of justice having jurisdiction within such colony or plantation respectively...