

The Townshend Act

British Parliament

1767

*An act for granting certain duties in the British colonies and plantations in America; for allowing a drawback of the duties of customs upon the exportation, from this kingdom, of coffee and cocoa nuts of the produce of the said colonies or plantations; for discontinuing the drawbacks payable on china earthen ware exported to America; and for more effectually preventing the clandestine running of goods in the 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 where it shall be found necessary; and towards 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, in parliament assembled, have therefore resolved to give and grant unto your Majesty the several rates and duties herein after mentioned; and do most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons, in this present parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same. 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 and upon the respective goods herein after mentioned, which shall be imported from *Great Britain* into any colony or plantation in *America* which now is, or hereafter may be, under the dominion of his Majesty, his heirs, or successors, the several rates and duties following; that is to say,

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of crown, plate, flint, and white glass, four shillings and eight pence.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of green glass, one shilling and two pence.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of red lead, two shillings.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of white lead, two shillings.

For every hundred weight avoirdupois of painters colours, two shillings.

For every pound weight avoirdupois of tea, three pence.

For every ream of paper, usually called or known by the name of *Atlas Fine*, twelve shillings.

For every ream of paper called *Atlas Ordinary*, six shillings.

For every ream of paper called *Bastard*, or *Double Copy*, one shilling and six pence.

For every single ream of blue paper for sugar bakers, ten pence halfpenny

For every ream of paper called *Blue Royal*, one shilling and six pence.

For every bundle of brown paper containing forty quires, not made in *Great Britain*, six pence.

For every ream of paper called *Brown Cap*, not made in *Great Britain*, nine pence.

For every ream of paper called *Brown Large Cap*, made in *Great Britain*, four pence halfpenny.

For every ream of paper called *Small Ordinary Brown*, made in *Great Britain*, three pence.

For every bundle, containing forty quires, of paper called *Whited Brown*, made in *Great Britain*, four pence halfpenny.

For every ream of cartridge paper, one shilling and one penny halfpenny.

For every ream of paper called *Chancery Double*, one shilling and six pence.

For every ream of paper called *Genoa Crown Fine*, on shilling and one penny halfpenny.

For every ream of paper called *Genoa Crown Second*, nine pence.

For every ream of paper called *German Crown*, nine pence.

For every ream of paper called *Fine Printing Crown*, nine pence.

For every ream of paper called *Second Ordinary Printing Crown*, six pence three farthings.

For every ream of paper called *Crown Fine*, made in *Great Britain*, nine pence.

For every ream of paper called *Crown Second*, made in *Great Britain*, six pence three farthings.

For every ream of paper called *Demy Fine*, not made in *Great Britain*, three shillings.

For every ream of paper called *Demy Second*, not made in *Great Britain*, one shilling and

four pence halfpenny...

VI. *And whereas the allowing a drawback of all the duties of customs upon the exportation, from this kingdom, of coffee and cocoa nuts, the growth of the British dominions in America, may be a means of encouraging the growth of coffee and cocoa in the said dominions;* be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, That from and after the said twentieth day of *November*, one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven, upon the exportation of any coffee or cocoa nuts, of the growth or produce of any *British* colony or plantation in *America*, from this kingdom as merchandize, the whole duties of customs, payable upon the importation of such coffee or cocoa nuts, shall be drawn back and repaid; in such manner, and under such rules, regulations, penalties, and forfeitures, as any drawback or allowance, payable out of the duties of customs upon the exportation of such coffee or cocoa nuts, was, could, or might be paid, before the passing of this act; any law, custom, or usage, to the contrary notwithstanding.

VII. And it is hereby further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no drawback shall be allowed for any china earthen ware sold, after the passing of this act, at the sale of the united company of merchants of *England* trading to the *East Indies*, which shall be entered for exportation from *Great Britain* to any part of *America*; any law, custom, or usage, to the contrary notwithstanding.

VIII. And it is hereby further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any china earthen ware sold, after the passing of this act, at the sale of the said united company, shall be entered for exportation to any part of *America* as china earthen ware that had been sold at the sale of the said company before that time; or, if any china earthen ware shall be entered for exportation to any parts beyond the seas, other than to some part of *America*, in order to obtain any drawback thereon, and the said china earthen ware shall nevertheless be carried to any part of *America*, and landed there contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act; that then, in each and every such case, the drawback shall be forfeited; and the merchant or other person making such entry, and the master or person taking the charge of the ship or vessel on board which the said goods shall be laden for exportation, shall forfeit double the amount of the drawback paid, or to be paid, for the same, and also treble the value of the said goods; one moiety to and for the use of his Majesty, his heirs, and successors; and the other moiety to such officer of the customs as shall sue for the same; to be prosecuted, sued for, and recovered, in such manner and form, and by the same rules and regulations, as other penalties inflicted for offences against any laws relating to the customs may be prosecuted, sued for, and recovered, by any act or acts of parliament now in force.

IX. *And for the more effectual preventing the clandestine running of goods in the British dominions in America,* be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That from and after the said twentieth day of *November*, one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven, the master or other person having or taking the charge or command of every ship or vessel arriving in any *British* colony or plantation in *America* shall, before he proceeds with his vessel to the place of unloading, come directly to the custom house for the port or district where he arrives, and make a just and true entry, upon oath, before the collector

and comptroller, or other principal officer of the customs there, of the burthen, contents, and lading of such ship or vessel, with the particular marks, numbers, qualities, and contents, of every parcel of goods therein laden, to the best of his knowledge; also where and in what port she took in her lading; of what country built; how manned; who was master during the voyage, and who are owners thereof; and whether any, and what goods, during the course of such voyage, had or had not been discharged out of such ship or vessel, and where: and the master or other person having or taking the charge or command of every ship or vessel, going out from any *British* colony or plantation in *America*, before he shall take in, or suffer to be taken into or laden on board any such ship or vessel, any goods, wares, or merchandizes, to be exported, shall, in like manner, enter and report outwards such ship or vessel, with her name and burthen, of what country built, and how manned, with the names of the master and owners thereof, and to what port or place he intends to pass or sail: and before he shall depart with such ship or vessel out of any such colony or plantation, he shall also bring and deliver unto the collector and comptroller, or other principal officer of the customs at the port or place where he shall lade, a content in writing, under his hand, of the name of every merchant, or other person who shall have laden, or put on board any such ship or vessel, any goods or merchandize, together with the marks and numbers of such goods or merchandize: and such master or person having or taking the charge or command of every such ship or vessel, either coming into, or going out of, any *British* colony or plantation as aforesaid, whether such ship or vessel shall be laden or in ballast, or otherwise, shall likewise publicly, in the open custom house, to the best of his knowledge, answer upon oath to such questions as shall be demanded of him by the collector and comptroller, or other principal officer of the customs for such port or place, concerning such ship or vessel, and the destination of her voyage, or concerning any goods or merchandize that shall or may be laden on board her, upon forfeiture of one hundred pound sterling money of *Great Britain*, for each and every default or neglect; to be sued for, prosecuted, recovered, and divided, in the same manner and form, by the same rules and regulations in all respects, as other pecuniary penalties, for offences against the laws relating to the customs or trade of his Majesty's colonies in *America*, may, by any act or acts of parliament now in force, be prosecuted, sued for, recovered, and divided.

X. *And whereas by an act of parliament made in the fourteenth year of the reign of King Charles the Second, intituled, An act for preventing frauds, and regulating abuses, in his Majesty's customs, and several other acts now in force, it is lawful for any officer of his Majesty's customs, authorized by writ of assistance under the seal of his majesty's court or exchequer, to take a constable, headborough, or other public officer inhabiting near unto the place, and in the day-time to enter and go into any house, shop, cellar, warehouse, or room or other place, and, in case of resistance, to break open doors, chests, trunks, and other package there, to seize, and from thence to bring, any kinds of goods or merchandize whatsoever prohibited or uncustomed, and to put and secure the same in his Majesty's store-house next to the place where such seizure shall be made: and whereas by an act made in the seventh and eighth years of the reign of King William the Third, intituled, An act for preventing frauds, and regulating abuses, in the plantation trade, it is, amongst other things, enacted, that the officers for collecting and managing his Majesty's revenue, and inspecting the plantation trade, in America, shall have the*