

political boss. He stirred up the people of Boston to oppose the acts of the king and Parliament. He called mass meetings to rouse the people against the English government, and then led the people to accept his own views. Adams was the leader of the Boston Tea Party, and he probably did as much as anybody to bring on the War for Independence.

These Committees of Correspondence solved the problem of keeping all parts of the country in touch with one another. Every neighborhood had a committee, and it corresponded with other committees. Through these committees the call now went out for the First Continental Congress, and through them the election of delegates, or representatives, to the Congress was ordered and managed.

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1. What was the European idea of the purpose of colonies?
  2. Imagine yourself a member of the English Parliament. Give your arguments for the right of Parliament to tax the colonies.
  3. Imagine yourself a colonist. State the arguments against taxation by Parliament. Read some typical arguments in a documentary source book. (See General Book List in the front of this book.)
  4. Explain the need for the Committees of Correspondence.
  5. In one sentence give the chief reason for the quarrel between England and her colonies.

## 2. The Declaration of Independence

**The work of the First Continental Congress.** The First Continental Congress met at Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. Among the important men of the day who attended were John Adams and his second-cousin Samuel Adams, George Washington, and Patrick Henry. Most of the members probably wished to avoid war with England. They denied the right of Parliament to tax the colonies, but wanted to remain citizens of the British Empire. They drew up a list of the rights of the colonies and of the ways in which the



*From the painting by C. O. DeLand. Courtesy, American Telephone and Telegraph Co.*

Said Patrick Henry to the First Continental Congress: "The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American."

king and Parliament had abused those rights. They wanted the harsh laws against Massachusetts repealed, or given up, and they wanted the king and Parliament to admit that the colonists could be taxed only by their own legislatures.

At the same time, the members of the Congress adopted a Non-Consumption Agreement. This document recommended that the colonists should pledge themselves to buy no goods in England until Parliament should repeal the laws to which the colonists objected. The purpose of the Non-Consumption Agreement was to make London merchants, who did not want to lose their trade with the colonies, ask Parliament to repeal the laws.

**The government refuses to grant the petition of the colonists.** The colonists had strong friends in England. The London merchants earnestly petitioned Parliament to grant the requests of the colonists. Edmund Burke, one of the most eloquent members of the House of Commons, pleaded for them. William Pitt, a great English statesman, proposed that Parliament should withdraw all of the laws to which the colonists