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APUSH – A2

I-Essay 5

Chapter 5, Doc. Set 1

The colonies were of great value to Britain, a value that it exploited, and in doing so the colonies were united and its value was used to make a strong opposition. England’s budget was tight after the Seven Years’ War and it leaned on its colonies in the America’s to bring home the bacon. Though the colonies were somewhat tolerant of the first policies issued by parliament, soon the colonies were under too much weight and cracked under the pressure. Colonial Englishmen would quickly rally under the cause to break off from the mother country.

Benjamin Franklin issued the Albany Plan of Union in 1754. This was an early attempt to unite the colonies “by virtue of which one general government may be formed in America…” (doc 1), but it met bad reception. Franklin later writes, (doc 2) “The Crown disapprov’d it, as having plac’d too much Weight in the democratic Part of the Constitution; and every Assembly as having allow’d too much to Prerogative. So it was totally rejected.” Although Franklin states how efficient the Plan would have been had it been passed, “…nor the Mischiefs suffered on both sides have occurred,” no one yet felt a notable grievance against England dominance in the Americas.

However some 10 years after the Albany Plan of Union was proposed, the Stamp Act was passed by parliament. This act among a few others would cause colonists to become amply more impassionate towards the Crown. Britain began leaning on the colonies too much in their policies (doc 3) “For every skin or piece of vellum or parchment, or sheet or piece of paper… a stamp duty of three pence. . . .”

Finally, people took the idea of colonies away from the mother country as absurd, and in no way efficient, (doc 5) “That they (the inhabitants of the English colonies) are entitled to life liberty and property, and they never ceded to any sovereign power whatever, a right to dispose of either without their consent… That our ancestors who first settled these colonies, were at the time of their emigration from the mother country, entitled to all the rights, liberties and immunities of free and natural-born subjects… That by such emigration they by no means forfeited, surrendered, or lost any of those rights…” Colonists wanted to be entitled to their own law, sovereign, free from any meddling from England. This meant that the Continental Congress would become the supreme authority, not the King of England. Showing that colonists were united, no longer colonists but Americans.

As Americans, the inhabitants of the English colonies proved to be determined to govern themselves. They were united with a common cause to break off from the mother country. As shown in the notorious woodcut envisioned by Benjamin Franklin on page 100, the colonies united became a much stronger force then as one piece.