during the interregnum before the organization of a real national power. But a temporary chaos was as inevitable ; and the form it took was the formation, particularly in the North, of popular organizations known as ‘‘Sons of Liberty,” the name being taken from a chance allusion in one of Barre’s speeches in the House of Commons. These, backed frequently by the town organizations, forced the stamp officers to resign, and destroyed the stamps wherever they could be found. The Connecticut stamp-officer, as he rode into Hartford on his white horse to deposit his resig­nation, with a thousand armed farmers riding after him, said that he felt “ like death on the pale horse, with all hell following him.” Newspapers and pamphlets rang every possible change on Coke’s dictum that “ an Act of Parliament contrary to Magna Charta was void,” and with warnings to stamp-officers that they would be considered enemies to the liberties of America if they attempted to carry out their duties. When the day broke on which the Act was to go into operation (November 1, 1765), America had neither stamps nor stamp-officers with which to fulfil its provisions.

1. The proposed Congress, commonly called the “Stamp- Act Congress,” met at New York (October 7, 1765),— New Hampshire, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia being acquiescent but not represented. It petitioned the king, the House of Commons, and the House of Lords to recognize fully “the several governments formed in the said colonies, with full powers of legislation, agreeably to the principles of the English constitution.” It also put forth a declaration of colonial rights, acknowledging allegiance to the crown, and claiming “ all the inherent rights and privileges of natural-born subjects within the kingdom of Great Britain,” including the right of petition, of trial by jury, of taxation by representatives, and of granting supplies to the crown, and protesting against the Stamp Act and the various Acts in restraint of trade. The action of this congress was thus purely declaratory ; there was no attempt to legislate ; and the importance of the meeting was in its demonstration of the possibility of union and of one road to it.
2. In the meantime the Grenville ministry had fallen (July 1765), and the Rockingham ministry (March 1766) repealed the Stamp Act. The repeal was supported by Pitt, and Whigs who agreed with him, on the distinction that taxation by parliament without colonial representation was in violation of the essential principles of the British constitution, but that the power of parliament to legis­late in every other point for all parts of the empire must be maintained (§ 21). Nevertheless, the repeal was pre ceded by a declaration of the power “of the king in parliament to bind the colonies and people of America in all cases whatsoever.”
3. The colonists received the repeal with an outburst of rejoicing loyalty. They cared little for Pitt’s distinction of powers, or even for the declaratory Act : it seemed to them merely the honours of war with which the ministry was to be allowed to retire. It really meant much more. The ruling interest in the home Government, disordered for the moment by its sudden discovery of the strength and union of the colonies, had drawn back, but not for ever. All through the year an undercurrent of irritation against the colonies is evident; and, when (June 1767) Townshend, the chancellor of the exchequer, had wrested the lead from the other members of the Grafton ministry, he passed through both Houses the bill for taxing imports into the colonies, to go into effect on 20th November follow­ing. It laid duties on glass, paper, painters’ colours, lead, and tea. As the proceeds were for the exchequer, they were to be distributed by the crown ; and there was no secret that the design was to provide salaries for the crown servants in North America. About the same time other Acts established a board of customs at Boston, legalized the “ writs of assistance,” and suspended the New York assembly until it should obey the Billeting Act. Town­shend died soon after, leaving his system as a legacy to his successor, Lord North.
4. The New York assembly granted the necessary money, said nothing as to its use, and escaped further molestation. Beyond this the Acts accomplished nothing. Their advocates had urged that the colonies admitted the power of parliament to control external commerce, and that the new taxes were an exercise of such control. If they desired a purely technical triumph they had it, for their logic was sound, and the taxes remained on the statute-book. But, as the colonies ceased to import the taxed articles, by popular agreement and enforcement, the taxes amounted to little. The irritations caused by the enforcement of the Navigation Acts only increased in bitterness ; and the official class in the colonies, on whom must for ever rest the responsibility for nine-tenths of the difficulties which followed, lost no chance of representing every pamphlet, newspaper letter, or public meeting as incipient rebellion. A popular outburst in Boston (June 1768), following the seizure of John Hancock’s sloop “ Liberty,” was thus used to give that town an unenvi­able reputation for disorder and violence. Colonial offi­cials everywhere openly or secretly urged the strongest measures ; and all the while the colonists, with the cautious tenacity of their race, were acting so guardedly that the British attorney-general was compelled to say, “Look into the papers and see how well these Americans are versed in the crown law ; I doubt whether they have been guilty of an overt act of treason, but I am sure they have come within a hair’s-breadth of it.”
5. The colonial officials, hoping for salaries inde­pendent of the assemblies, began to show a disposition to govern without those bodies. When the Massachusetts assembly refused by a large vote to withdraw its circular letter to the other assemblies urging united petition to the king alone, as an umpire between themselves and the British parliament, for redress of grievances, the assembly was prorogued, and did not reassemble for a year. As a gentle hint of a possible mode of re-establishing popular government, delegates from the towns met in convention at Boston (September 1768), renewed the protests against the Acts of the ministry, and provided for the maintenance of public order. In the following December and January parliament passed a vote of censure on this proceeding, and advised that those who had taken part in it should be sent to England for trial on the charge of treason. This was a new grievance for the assemblies. They passed remonstrances against any attempt to send Americans beyond seas for trial, as a violation of the citizen’s right to trial by a jury from the vicinage ; and their governors at once prorogued them. Civil government in the colonies, under its original constitution, was evidently in sore straits.
6. In September 1768 two British regiments which the colonial officials had succeeded in obtaining arrived at Boston. Instead of a rebellious population they found their most formidable opponents in minute law points, which were made to beset them at every turn. The Billeting Act required the ordinary barracks to be filled first : the council would assign no quarters in town until the barracks outside were filled. The assembly was not in session to authorize anything further, and the governor did not dare to summon it. The troops, who had marched into the town as into a captured place, with sixteen rounds of ammunition per man, were presently without a place in which to cook their dinners, until their commander hired houses out of the army chest. It was natural that