

NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION

A BOSTON lawyer and pamphleteer is a leading critic of Britain's attempt to impose taxes on American colonists without their consent, *writes our civil rights editor, December 20, 1765.*

James Otis Jr. strongly opposes taxation without representation. He also denounces the Stamp Act, which imposes a tax on printed materials and which, he says, threatens to bring the justice system to a halt.

In his earlier pamphlet, *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved*, he criticizes the British monarchy of George III: "that no parts of His Majesty's

dominions can be taxed without their consent; that every part has a right to be represented—." His words are being taken up by patriots who want to unite Britain's 13 American colonies against these tax measures.

Britain is seeking to tax its American colonies to help pay for the recent French and Indian War. But colonists are angry about Britain's demands, having already provided militias to help Britain defeat France in the war, which took place in north eastern North America.

Patriots are saying the British government should heed the words of Otis, whose intellect and legal

talent are respected by many. Otis argues that because the colonists do not have a representative in the British Parliament, the Parliament has no authority to tax them. His views are almost a declaration of independence.

Colonists are also unhappy about Britain's attempt to control trade in America. Boston merchants led the protests, objecting to a sugar tax by refusing to trade in luxury goods imported from Britain.

Along with Otis, other influential figures are starting to emerge from Massachusetts, including Samuel "Sam"

Adams, son of a merchant and brewer, and John Hancock, another merchant.

IN 1757, during the French and Indian War, 800 Massachusetts militia helped defend Fort William Henry, a British garrison in upstate New York, attacked by French troops and their Native allies. The fort surrendered, but the British and colonists—including women and children—were killed. The battle was dramatized in *The Last of the Mohicans*, James Fenimore Cooper's classic novel published in 1826.