

Resolutions of the Boston Town Meeting; September 13, 1768

The committee appointed to take the state of our public affairs into consideration reported the following declaration and resolves:

Whereas it is the first principle in civil society, founded in nature and reason, that no law of the society can be binding on any individual without his consent, given by himself in person, or by his representative of his own free election; and whereas in and by an Act of the British Parliament passed in the first year of the reign of King William and Queen Mary, of glorious and blessed memory, entitled an Act declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject, and Settling the Succession of the Crown; the Preamble of which Act is in these words, viz: "Whereas the late King James the Second, by the assistance of diverse evil councillors, judges, and ministers employed by him, did endeavour to subvert and extirpate the Protestant religion, and the laws and liberties of this kingdom," it is expressly among other things declared, that the levying money for the use of the Crown, by pretence of prerogative, without grant of Parliament for a longer time or in other manner than the same is granted, is illegal. And whereas in the third year of the reign of the same King William and Queen Mary, their Majesties were graciously pleased by their royal charter to give and grant to the inhabitants of his Majesty's province all the territory therein described, to be held in free and common socage; and also to ordain and grant to the said inhabitants certain rights, liberties, and privileges therein expressly mentioned; among which it is granted, established, and ordained, that all and every the subjects of them, their heirs and successors, which shall go to inhabit within said province and territory, and every of their children which shall happen to be born there, or on the seas in going thither, or returning from thence, shall have and enjoy all liberties and immunities of free and natural subjects, within any of the dominions of them, their heirs and successors, to all intents, purposes, and constructions whatever, as if they and every of them were born within the realm of England.

And whereas by the aforesaid Act of Parliament made in the first year of the said King William and Queen Mary, all and singular the promises contained therein, are claimed demanded, and insisted on as the undoubted rights and liberties of the subjects born within the realm.

And whereas the freeholders and other inhabitants of this town, the metropolis of the province in said charter mentioned, do hold all the rights and liberties therein contained to be sacred and inviolable - at the same time publicly and solemnly acknowledging their firm and unshaken allegiance to their alone and rightful sovereign King George the third, the lawful successor of the said King William and Queen Mary to the British throne.

Resolved, that the said freeholders and other inhabitants of the Town of Boston will at the utmost peril of their lives and fortunes take all legal and constitutional measures to defend and maintain the person, family, crown, and dignity of our said sovereign Lord George the third; and all and

singular the rights, liberties, privileges, and immunities granted in the said royal charter, as well as those which are declared to be belonging to us as British subjects by birthright, as all others therein specially mentioned.

And whereas by the said royal charter it is specially granted to the Great and General Court or assembly therein constituted, to impose and levy proportionable and reasonable assessments, rates, and taxes upon the estates and persons of all and every the proprietors and inhabitants of said province or territory, for the service of the king in the necessary defence and support of his government of this province, and the protection and preservation of his subjects therein, therefore:

Voted, as the opinion of this town, that the levying money within this province for the use and service of the Crown in other manner than the same is granted by the Great and General Court or assembly of this province is in violation of the said royal charter; and the same is also in violation of the undoubted natural rights of subjects, declared in the aforesaid Act of Parliament, freely to give and grant their own money for the service of the Crown, with their own consent, in person, or by representatives of their own free election.

And whereas in the aforesaid Act of Parliament it is declared that the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with the consent of Parliament, is against law; it is the opinion of this town that the said declaration is founded in the indefeasible right of the subjects to be consulted, and to give their free consent in person, or by representatives of their own free election, to the raising and keeping a standing army among them; and the inhabitants of this town being free subjects, have the same right derived from nature and confirmed by the British constitution, as well as the said royal charter; and therefore the raising or keeping a standing army, without their consent in person or by representatives of their own free election, would be an infringement of their natural, constitutional, and charter rights; and the employing such army for the enforcing of laws made without the consent of the people, in person, or by their representatives, would be a grievance.

The foregoing report being divers times distinctly read, and considered by the town, the question was put: whether the same shall be accepted and recorded, and passed unanimously in the affirmative. Upon a motion made and seconded, the following votes was unanimously passed, viz :

Whereas by an Act of Parliament of the first of King William and Queen Mary, it is declared that for the redress of all grievances, and for amending, strengthening, and preserving the laws, parliaments ought to be held frequently, and inasmuch as it is the opinion of this town that the people labour under many intolerable grievances which unless speedily redressed threaten the total destruction of our invaluable natural, constitutional, and charter rights:

And furthermore as his excellency the governor has declared himself unable, at the request of this town, to call a general court, which is the assembly of the states of this province for the redress of such grievances:

Voted, that this town will now make choice of a suitable number of persons to act for them as a committee in convention, with such as may be sent to join them from the several towns in this province, in order that such measures may be consulted and advised as his Majesty's service, and the peace and safety of his subjects in this province may require; whereupon the Hon. James Otis, Esq., the Hon. Thomas Cushing, Esq., Mr. Samuel Adams, and John Hancock, Esq., were appointed a committee for the said purpose, the town hereafter to take into consideration what recompense shall be made them for the service they may perform.

Voted, that the selectmen be directed to write to the selectmen of the several towns within this province informing them of the foregoing vote, and to propose that a convention be held, if they shall think proper, at Faneuil Hall, in this town, on Tuesday the 22d day of September, instant, at 10 o'clock before noon.