Fitzgerald

The Whiskey Rebellion –

How will the new government deal with a minority who rebels the rule of the majority?

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| What was the burden of the Whiskey Tax? | * Would have to pay more for a “necessity”   + Used at weddings, funerals, warm the body in winter, refresh in the summer * Cost average family $1.50/year   + Usu. drank 6 gallons/year |  |
| Why was whiskey so important to Western (Backcountry) farmers? | * it was their main source of cash   + subsistence farmers * 1,200 lbs. of grain could be distilled into 20 gallons of whiskey   + The 20 gallons can be carried by mule to Philadelphia   + Sold for $1/gallon * Use this money to   + Pay for dry goods, supplies   + Pay ministers’ salaries! | Scots-Irish – the people most famous in the world for making whiskey  Dry good – sugar, salt, nails, gun, bullets |
| What was Hamilton’s goal and how did it hurt the Western farmers? | * Hamilton’s goal – pay off the war debt   + Raise $800,000 with this tax * Burden to Western farmer – * It would take $6 of the only $20 they raised annually |  |
| Describe the battle over this tax? | * Led to a rebellion * Washington sends in an army of 13,500 soldiers!   + To show strength * Questions –   + Is the rebellion justified?   + Was the gov’t correct in putting the rebellion down? |  |
| Describe the points made on each side in Congress. | * Points made against the tax   + Paying the debt will benefit the wealthy speculators who bought the bonds for 10 cents on the dollar and would get paid back full price   + People have a right to get drunk   + Why not tax salaries of rich guys and pensions and lawyers   + Tax the beer and cider of the New Englanders * Points made for the tax   + Alcohol is a sinful luxury   + Rich already paying a tax on imports costing them more than $6/year   + Farmers can just raise the price of whiskey |  |
| Why aren’t the Democratic Republicans defending the farmers? | * They had cut a deal   + Would agree to pay the debt as Hamilton wanted to   + If the South got the capital |  |
| How did the farmers protest? | * Just like the colonists had!   + Tarred and feathered tax collectors   + Planted liberty poles with slogans against taxation   + Passed resolutions of opposition   + Formed committees of correspondence | No taxation without representation! |
| How did the government respond? | * Hamilton wanted to send the army! * Washington says no! * Send a proclamation saying to pay it! * Asks Congress a law that if interfere with tax collectors must go to trial 300 miles away in Philadelphia!   + Just like King George took prisoners to London for trial! | Unconstitutional – trial must be where crime took place! |
| Describe the rebellion that broke out in 1794. | * Tax collectors attacked * U.S. soldiers sent to help tax collectors are surrounded * Federal officer killed * 5,000 rebels * Heading for Pittsburg * Declared open rebellion by the Supreme Court |  |
| How is the rebellion suppressed? | * Washington and Hamilton lead an army of 13,500 men   + an army almost as large as the whole army ion the Revolution * the rebellion quickly ends * but Hamilton stays for months * rounds up 100s of suspects * keeps them in corrals * only 20 actually had enough evidence against them to be taken to trial * taken to trial in Philadelphia |  |
| What does Hamilton say about the rebellion? | * Only fear of punishment holds a nation together * “The government ought to inspire respect with a display of strength.” * The rich and the well born ought to rule. |  |
| What does Jefferson say about the rebellion? | * Had stated in the Declaration - The people have a right to rebel when the government deprives them of their rights * A little rebellion now and then was a good thing – a medicine necessary for “the sound health of the government” * “ . . . the first error was to pass it (the tax); the second was to enforce it; and the third, to make it the means of splitting the Union.” | John Locke’s Right of Rebellion |
| What are the final results? | * Only 2 of the 20 people brought to trial were found guilty   + Washington pardoned them both * Tax was collected for 6 years   + The cost of putting down the rebellion was greater than the money taken in by the tax * Jefferson repealed the tax as soon as he got into office |  |