The Problems that England Faced after the French and Indian War

**Directions:** The French and Indian War is over, but some new problems have arisen. Below is a description of three problems: After reading each one, you will determine the solution that will best benefit your assigned group. (Mr. Winchell and Ms. Kelly will let you know which group you are in). Highlight the solution that would benefit your group and explain why.

**Problem #1: Western Lands**

Even though the French and Indian War is over, the colonists in the Ohio River Valley continued to be attacked by Native Americans. The Native Americans want all foreigners out of their homelands and are willing to use violence to achieve this goal. British officials have concluded that the colonists cannot defend themselves. Their conclusion is supported by the fact that the colonists were not even able to supply any men, ammunition, or money to help the British win the French and Indian War. Fearing renewed fighting with the Native Americans and French, British leaders have suggested that permanent forts be built along the Ohio River Valley, Great Lakes and the Mississippi to protect the colonists.

English leaders have also begun a plan for new colonies to be established in the Ohio Valley and other Western Territories. They have faced several problems: First, colonists disagree over who should own the land between Pennsylvania and Virginia. Second, they have to decide whether and what lands have to be set aside for sale, for farming, for hunting and trapping. Third, the British government and some colonists claim to own the same land. Finally, the land claims of Native Americans, some of who have treaties with the English, have to be resolved.

Possible Solutions:

1. Station several regiments of British Troops in the colonies to defend the West against the French and the Native Americans.
2. Temporarily close Western Lands until sound plans for their future can be drawn up.
3. Allow settlers to move west at their own risk without defending them against the Native Americans.
Problem #2: Trade Regulations

Colonists frequently avoid the mercantile laws that regulate trade. During the French and Indian War, colonial shippers even smuggled goods past the British, pretending to be blockading enemy ports in the French West Indies. Indeed, smuggling is a way of life for many colonists. Several wealthy colonists, including John Hancock, have earned their fortunes by smuggling at the expense of British trade regulations. Smuggling is so bad that the British collect less than £2,000 per year even though it costs four times that amount to even collect the taxes! £700,000 worth of goods are brought into the colonies illegally each year by colonists who avoid paying taxes. If these violations continue, England will continue to lose money and be denied major benefits that the colonies are supposed to bring in.

One of the difficulties in preventing smuggling rests with the British tax collectors. They are inefficient, corrupt, or both. They accept bribes rather than collect taxes that will help pay England’s debt. Even when smugglers are caught, they usually escape punishment! The problem, in part, is that even if a smuggler gets accused, they would stand trial before a jury of their own peers who don’t believe that smuggling is a crime...

Possible Solutions:
1. Pass strong laws to enforce existing trade regulations, i.e. eliminate jury trial for people accused of smuggling and eliminate the need for search warrants.
2. Repeal all trade regulations.
3. Allow smuggling to continue.
Problem #3: Finances

Officials in London estimate that 10,000 British soldiers are needed to defend the colonists from more Native Americans and French attacks. The cost of maintaining such a large army in the colonies would be £300,000 per year. Many people in England think the colonists should help pay for their own protection.

Furthermore, the French and Indian War has cost England £70,000,000 and doubled the national debt to £140,000,000! Compared to this staggering sum, the colonists’ barely pay any taxes (1/20th of what the British citizens pay). The British even tried to raise taxes in England to pay for the French and Indian War, but the citizens rioted. The taxpayers in England think it is time that their counterparts in the colonies should pay their equal share.

The colonists see no reason to pay England. They have never paid direct taxes to England and have no intention of paying for a war that they didn’t start or need. (Especially since they have no say in the government that wants them to pay a “fair share”)

Possible Solutions:
1. Increase taxes on people living in England.
2. Create a sales taxes on things colonists use everyday.
3. Have colonists pay the same taxes as people living in England.
Grenville Takes Charge

With the ending of the French and Indian War, finally, the British were free to address themselves to the most pressing problems of the Empire. Some of the problems, of course, were raised by the war itself. But, most of them had been long standing, and the war had only called attention to them. The new British Prime Minister, George Grenville, was a no nonsense businessman eager to restore England’s finances. Historians have accused him of being more concerned with balancing a budget than saving an Empire, but the problems he faced were real enough.

Questions:

1. How did Colonial and British interests change after the French and Indian War?

   

2. Were the British justified in raising taxes in the colonies to pay their debt? Explain.

   

3. If you were George Grenville, how would you solve the problems addressed in this article?

   