

is evident in Massachusetts legislation. Between 1748 and 1768 over eleven Massachusetts acts were disallowed.

By order-in-council of 1766 the Board of Trade was again degraded to a mere advisory body and shorn of its executive and constructive powers. From 1768 down to the end of the colonial period only two acts were disallowed for Massachusetts. It must be added, however, that the general slackness of the British Administration from 1714 to 1748 and again from 1766 down to the end of the colonial period does not entirely explain the comparatively few disallowances that occur in those periods. After a number of years of Royal control Massachusetts began to adapt herself to the new restrictions, and so successfully that the Home Government never really realized that the affairs of the colony were gradually drifting beyond its control. At first, Massachusetts adopted the plan of passing acts for a limited time so that they would have had their effect before they could be disallowed by the Home Government. To check this the Governors were instructed to insert a suspending clause in bills that might affect Imperial interests, so that they should not go into effect until the Royal approval had been given. We have noticed that Massachusetts successfully avoided this device, though three of her acts<sup>60</sup> were clearly disallowed because they contained no suspending clause. However, Massachusetts finally evolved a much shrewder method of avoiding a direct clash with the Home authorities and at the same time of getting her own way, namely by passing as resolves what as legislative acts would have eventually gone to the Home Government only perhaps to be disallowed. When it is remembered that for Canada seventy provincial acts were disallowed between 1867 and 1890, a period of twenty-three years, the number of public acts disallowed for Massachusetts—only forty-seven in a period of eighty-three years—seems amazingly small. To talk about 'British oppression' in the matter of Imperial control over Massachusetts legislation is manifestly absurd. Apparently it was not a question of excessive control but of spasmodic and inefficient control. If in 1757 Pitt had only had a truer vision of the real problem in America, if England's sense of government had only kept

<sup>60</sup>See Chap xvi, 1730-31, note 32; chap i, 1757-8, note 33; chap. v, 1765-6, note 36.