The Stamp Act was one of the leading causes of the Revolutionary War. It required that many documents such as licenses, diplomas, contracts and even playing cards be printed on embossed (or stamped) paper that had a tax on it. Parliament intended to use the tax to help pay the expenses of British troops on the frontier, but instead the colonists reacted with fury as they torched the homes of stamp distributors, captured stamps and destroyed them and completely refused to comply with the act. The issue they were so angry about? Prime Minister Grenville created a series of acts to deal with the huge national debt and pay for the troops in North America. The Currency Act forbade the colonies from printing their own money in an effort to stabilize the money supply.
George Grenville's Speech in the House of Commons, January 14, 1766. George Grenville was the Prime Minister of Britain when the Stamp Act was passed in 1765. Parliament's Right to Tax the Colonies. . . . That this kingdom has the sovereign, the supreme legislative power over America, is granted. It cannot be denied; and taxation is a part of that sovereign power. It is one branch of the legislation. It is, it has been exercised, over those who are not, who were never represented. It is exercised over the India Company, the merchants of London. Bullion, John L. A Great and Necessary Measure: George Grenville and the Genesis of the Stamp Act, 1763-1765. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1982.