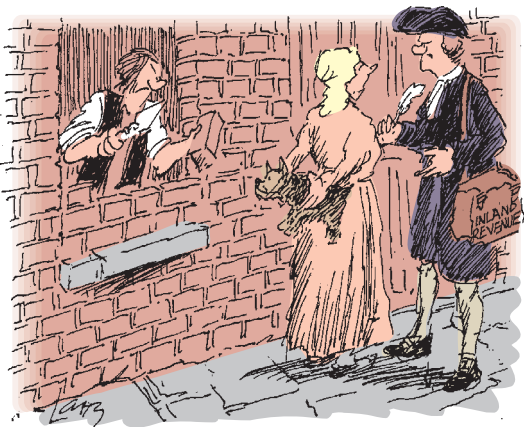


Imposing taxes



Taxation has existed almost as long as civilisation itself. The Ancient Persians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all funded their war chests by taxing land

Obligatory service was an alternative in medieval times. Trade goods have long been a favourite but among the odder targets, Britain – which introduced **income tax** in 1799 to pay for the Napoleonic wars – once also taxed windows, wig powder and dogs. Revolutionary France wanted to boost the birthrate, so encouraged families by taxing bachelors in the 1790s. Imperial Russia taxed beards in the 18th century to stimulate the western habit of shaving