

The British Government and the Indian States (1857-62)

THE Mutiny brought about far-reaching changes in the attitude of the British authorities towards the Indian States. Even before the last shots had been fired, and long before the Queen's Proclamation had been issued, reappraisal of British policy had begun. The question which received the immediate and most serious attention of the Government was that of succession to the *gādi* when a ruler died without leaving any male heir. As early as July 27, 1857, Disraeli had voiced grave concern at the policy of annexation by lapse in a three-hour long speech in Parliament.¹ The Governor-General, Canning, also wanted to undo the mischief created by the annexationist policy of Dalhousie, but he was "overscrupulous in doing anything which can look like a reflection on his predecessor".²

The first case involved in this changed policy was that of Chirkaree. This State was held under Sanads granted to Bijaya Bahadur and his heirs and successors in 1804 and 1811. In 1822, Bijaya Bahadur being seventy years old and having no legitimate heir, requested the Government of India to recognise Rattan Sing, the son of his illegitimate son Ranjit Sing, as his heir. This request was complied with and Rattan Sing succeeded to the *gādi* in 1834. The Political Agent, Sleeman, however, wanted the State to escheat on the death of Rattan Sing, if he had no male issue. The Governor-General reserved final decision until the contingency had arisen, although he doubted whether even if Rattan Sing had a son, he had any right to the State, since Rattan Sing himself had no right whatsoever.³

In 1857, the Rajah, being in poor health, requested the Government to recognise his son as his heir. Before any decision had been taken, the Mutiny broke out and a change occurred in the attitude of the Government. The Governor-General, therefore, decided that as the accession of Rattan Sing had been allowed, "it hardly admitted of dispute that the recognition was not restricted to Rajah Rattan Sing *personally*, but signified besides his

1. G. E. Buckle. The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Vol. IV, 89.

2. J. Martineau. The Life and Correspondence of Sir Bartle Frere, I, 373.

3. India Political Letter No. 2 of 9 February, 1858.

accession ... his admission to all rights secured to the Rajah of Chirkaree by the Sunnuds". Hence, the recognition of Rattan Sing "necessarily involved the right of his heirs ... to succeed to the Raj". So, over-ruling the objection of the Political Agent, Sir Robert Hamilton, the request was granted.⁴

In January, 1857, the ruler of Dewas had asked for permission to adopt his nine year old nephew; but Hamilton had given a non-committal reply. In June, the Mutiny having already started, he suggested to the Government of India that in order to dispel the tension which prevailed in Central India the request be granted. The Government gave its sanction on 28 January 1858 on condition that if a son was born to the ruler subsequent to the adoption, the adopted son should be given a life pension of Rs. 4,000/- per month.⁵

Another important instance was that of Ajayagurh. On 23 October, 1855, Edmonstone had informed Hamilton that the ruler being childless, and the State being of rather recent origin,—having been granted to Bakht Sing in 1807,—it should be annexed on his death. The matter being referred to the Court of Directors, they ordered an enquiry into the origin, nature and extent of the rights of Bakht Sing's family as they existed before the Sanad was granted. At this stage the Mutiny intervened and nothing was done.⁶

During the Mutiny the widowed Rani stood firmly loyal, and Hamilton recommended the restoration of the State. This, he believed, would create a great impression in Bundelkhand and help its pacification.⁷ As no steps were taken, Hamilton again reminded the Government, and further recommended that the Rani be permitted to adopt Ranjoor Sing, the illegitimate son of the late ruler.⁸

Shakespear, who succeeded Hamilton, also recommended the same course. He drew the Government's attention to the ruin which had befallen the State and declared, "It is my duty to state that we cannot, at the present time, refuse to allow an adoption without recurring serious danger."⁹ Apart from the question of political expediency, there were other material

4. Ind. Pol. Let. No. 2 of 9 February, 1858.

5. Ibid.

6. Collection to India Political Despatch No. 74 of 22 December 1859, pp. 13—4.

7. Hamilton-Edmonstone, 14 July 1858, Ibid, p. 3.

8. Hamilton-Beadon, 7 February 1859, Ibid, pp. 5—7.

9. Shakespear-Beadon, 11 August 1859; 30 August 1859, Ibid, pp. 9—12.

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considerations for such a step, as Shakespear pointed out: "any policy which tends to extend our territory in Bundelkhand will be found injurious in a pecuniary point of view and it is my duty to say that the people are better clothed and their land better cultivated in the native states of Bundelkhand than in any portion of the British possessions which I have yet seen in the province."¹⁰

Ranjoor Sing was, therefore, recognised and installed as the ruler.¹¹ The Secretary of State not only approved of the measure but regretted that this had not been done earlier.¹²

Yet another case was that of Hindoor or Nulagurh. When the Rajah died childless, the succession was disputed by his three elder but illegitimate brothers, who claimed that the jagir was granted to their father for services rendered during the Gurkha War and was guaranteed to his descendants whether legitimate or not by Ochterlony.¹³ The Governor-General decided against restoration but on the recommendation of Lawrence and in recognition of the services rendered by their father, agreed that the jagir should be continued in perpetuity and in addition the jagir of the Rani also should be equally divided among them, provided the holders and their successors remained loyal.

In the meantime, a change had occurred in the attitude of the Government, both at home and in India, and the possibility of restoration was mooted. John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, was against it, but he suggested that in case the Government decided to restore the state, the second brother Ooggur Sing should be recognised. The Government taking into account the prevailing practice in the Hill State and also the Hindu Law which did not debar illegitimate sons from succession, restored the state to Ooggur Sing.¹⁴

When Tufazzal Khan, a jagirdar in Thaneshwar, died childless, both the Assistant Commissioner of the district as well as the Commissioner of the Division recommended the rejection of the claims of his illegitimate

10. Shakespear-Beadon, 20 September 1859, Coll. to India Political Despatch (74) 22 December 1859 pp. 15—6.

11. Beadon-Shakespear, 9, September 1859, *Ibid.*, 13—14.

12. India Political Despatch, No. 74 of 22 December 1859.

13. Petition, 18 January 1857.

14. Edmonstone-Lawrence, 12 July, 1858; India Political Despatch, No. 51 of 30, August 1858; India Political Despatch, No. 37 of 9 September 1858; India Foreign Letter No. 24 of 8 March, 1859.

son Barkat Ali and the recognition of his brother as the ruler. This was accepted by the Government of India although the Chief Commissioner pointed out that Mohammedan Law made no distinction between married and unmarried wives.¹⁵ The important thing to note is that in this case no attempt was made to escheat the territory although it was not a state but merely a jagir.

Following the new policy, the Directors had ordered the restoration of Nungklow in March 1858 and had directed that the new rulers should be elected by general consent as had previously been the practice in such circumstances in Cossya Hill States. Annexation they conceived to be a violation of the local law.¹⁶

Allen, a member of the Board of Revenue, being ordered to carry out the instruction, suggested convoking an assembly of all the powerful chiefs to elect a new ruler from the collateral branch of the late Rajah, although he regretted the restoration as the territory was admirably suited for European settlers. The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Halliday, was also against restoration on the ground that the place was particularly suitable for European troops. He also felt that if restored, the progress of the State would be retarded.¹⁷

The Governor-General, therefore, asked the Lieutenant Governor for further information and to suggest what restrictions should be placed on the new Rajah. He also wanted to know whether the people had shown any disinclination for British rule.¹⁸

Allen reported that British rule had been greatly successful and its withdrawal would be harmful to the progress of the state. All the prospective candidates he considered to be equally unsuitable. He, therefore, suggested that the selected chief should be given limited power and placed under the general control of the Political Officer at Chera Punji. He further proposed that the Government should retain the right to remove the ruler, if necessary, and to establish civil and military posts and to keep waste lands for European colonisation.¹⁹

15. India Political Despatch, No. 37 of 9 September 1858.

16. Ibid, No. 10 of 3 March 1858.

17. Allen-Young, 31 May 1858; Young-Allen, 24 June 1858; India Political Collection Despatch II, 11—15.

18. Offg. Secy. Govt. Ind.—Secy. Govt. Beng. 2 August 1858, Ibid, 17.

19. Allen-Young, 3 November 1858, Ibid, 19—25.

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Halliday thought that election would be a matter of bargain and sale and therefore recommended that the status quo should continue.²⁰

Canning, therefore, referred the matter to the Secretary of State—the Company having been abolished in the meantime—for reconsideration. The Secretary of State refused to reverse the late Directors' decision and ordered the restoration to be effected, the cost of European supervision being borne by the state.²¹

The Rajah of Dutya had died during the Mutiny on 19 November, 1857, leaving no legitimate son; but before his death had adopted a son of the jagirdar of Bhasma. Hamilton, the Political Agent, recommended the recognition of the adopted son on the ground that Dutya was, according to a Minute of Metcalfe, one of the states which possessed the right of adoption. This was accepted by the Government.²²

During the last stages of the Mutiny, the Directors had ordered the restoration of another escheated state, Dhar. Since the Government of India delayed carrying this into execution, the Secretary of State, who had now replaced the Directors, ordered the state to be restored with all possible haste. As nothing was done, peremptory order was sent to effect it without any further delay. The Secretary of State on this occasion observed, "it is difficult, if not impossible, for Her Majesty's Government efficiently to discharge the functions imposed upon them and to acquit themselves of the responsibilities vested in them by the Legislature, if the instructions transmitted by them to India are not promptly carried out or any explanation afforded of the reason why they are not complied with".²³

The policy of restoring escheated states, however, had serious drawbacks. Where the state had been under British administration for long it was inconvenient to reopen the question; and this inconvenience was further enhanced where new interests had been acquired in land and the value of tenures had increased in consequence of improvements effected as a result of enlightened British rule. These difficulties were encountered in the case of Baghat which the Government wanted to restore. One Major

20. Minute, 20 November 1858 India Political Coll. Despatch II, pp. 26—28.

21. India Political Despatch No. 17 of 14 Ap. 1859.

22. Hamilton-Edmonstone, 19 January 1858, India Foreign Control 104 of 27 August 1858; Edmonstone-Hamilton, 11 March 1858, India Foreign Control 106 of 27 August 1858.

23. India Political Despatch No. 52 of 27 October 1859.

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General Innes had acquired and improved certain lands in that state and the Government suggested that the problem could be solved by securing to him the undisputed possession of those lands. But the Home Government pointed out that no such arrangement was possible in the case of Indians who had similarly acquired and improved lands in the state and who had equal claims on the Government and whose interests would in all probability be seriously compromised by the restoration. They, therefore, decided not to reopen the question.²⁴

Although the Government of India as well as the Home Government were determined to undo, as far as possible, the mischief created by the policy of lapse, and the Queen's Proclamation had categorically laid down that the British Government wanted no further extension of territory, yet they had not laid down any general policy for the future and great uneasiness and anxiety still existed among Indian states, especially the lesser ones, about the real intentions of the Government. The wide prevalence of such feelings among the Princes was testified to by no less a person than Sir Bartle Frere. "It is impossible," he wrote to Sir George Clerk, "to exaggerate the evil of this state of uncertainty. Even the most intelligent Ministers of the states that have best reason to be assured of our goodwill, feel most keenly that we have no fixed policy regarding them; that their fate depends greatly on the character of the British Agent at their court, and that a harsh or indolent Political Agent may turn the scale against generations of loyalty and good service." Once, when Frere expressed regret at the maladministration of a petty state, he was told "What can you expect? The young chief has no children. It is not likely that he will be allowed to adopt. So everyone scrambles for what he can get while there is anything to be had."²⁵

The initiative for a clear enunciation of policy came from the Princes. During the last stages of the Mutiny, the rulers of Cis-Sutlej States, who had stood staunchly loyal, preferred certain requests to the Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner, Lawrence, while marching through Ambala discussed them with the Maharajahs of Patiala and Jhind.²⁶

Their first request was that they should be allowed to inflict capital punishment on their own subjects without obtaining the prior approval of the British authorities, a privilege which they had been deprived of in

24. India Political Despatch No. 35 of March 1861.

25. Frere-Clerk, 14 June 1860, Martineau-Bartle Frere I, 373.

26. Temple-Edmonstone, 16 June 1858, India Foreign Control 84 of 3 June 1859.

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1847. The Chief Commissioner recommended its approval on the ground that during the existing crisis, they would use this power more sparingly than the British officers.²⁷

Secondly, when an infant succeeded, a Council of Regency should be formed consisting of old, competent and trusty dependants to the exclusion of strangers and relatives. This, also, was recommended by the Chief Commissioner.²⁸

Thirdly, they requested that on the failure of natural heirs, they be given the right of adoption from among the descendants of Phool or common ancestor. The Commissioner was of the view that since such a right had not been granted to the rulers of Nagpore, Jhansi and other states, there was no reason why an exception should be made in the present instance. Moreover, if the request was granted, the paramount power would be excluded from all escheat. He, however, agreed with the Commissioner that whatever rules of Imperial policy in this respect were made should apply equally to these states also, and if questions of escheat and lapse should come under review and if any adoption was allowed, a year's revenue should be levied as *nazarana*.²⁹ Thus was set in motion a discussion which resulted in the grant of Sanads of Adoption.

Fourthly, that women should be excluded from all participation in the affairs of state and no complaints from the female members of the chief's families should be entertained. The first proposition was agreed to by the Chief Commissioner but as regards the second, he thought that although as a rule the Government did not interfere in such cases, yet, occasions might arise in which common humanity would dictate interference. So this right he wanted to retain.³⁰

As regards the sixth request that the British Government should not interfere on behalf of relatives, connections or dependants of the chiefs, the Chief Commissioner recommended that no change should be effected in the existing practice.³¹

27. R. Temple-Edmonstone, 16 June 1858, India Foreign Control 84 of 3 June 1859.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid; also G. C. Barues-R. Temple, 26 May 1858, India Foreign Control. 84 of 3 June 1859

30. As No. (2).

31. Ibid.

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The next request, that the Government should grant a sanad to the chiefs under the seal and sign manual of the Queen, guaranteeing to them and their lineal male heirs, their territories, the Chief Commissioner considered highly politic and acceded to.

The last request was that claims against state subjects should not be ascertained in British courts. The Punjab Code allowed this when the action had taken place in British territory. The Chief Commissioner and the Commissioner, both, were of the view that this provision had not so far worked well due to the objection of the chiefs, but yet they wanted it to be maintained.³²

When the matter was referred to the Government of India for decision, the Governor-General-in-Council agreed to grant all the requests except the one regarding adoption. They observed, "these are important innovations in the custom which had always prevailed among the Cis-Sutlej territories and cannot be sanctioned". The chiefs were, therefore, informed that the Government did not desire to interfere with the custom which had been always customary in the family and did not "think it necessary to enter into any special engagement on this point". As regards Sanads, the Governor-General decided to refer the matter to the Secretary of State.³³

But the Government having forwarded the requests to the Secretary of State without any comment, the latter wanted the former's views at the earliest possible opportunity on the requests and also about the propriety of granting the petitioners as well as other faithful rulers the same concessions. As regards the sanads, the Secretary of State was of the opinion that all applications for them ought to be made through the Governor-General and if approved by him would be granted through him. Although the Governor-General had rejected the request about adoption, the Secretary of State felt that in view of their great loyalty and as a special case, it might be conceded to them. So they were to be asked to supply the Governor-General with a list of the existing descendants of Phool, to be periodically revised; and the Government was to levy a year's revenue as *nazarana* in every case of adoption or sanction.³⁴

32. Barnes-Temple, 20 May 1858; Temple-Barnes, 16 June 1858, India Foreign Control 84 of 3 June 1859.

33. Beadon-Davies, 28 May 1859, *Ibid.*

34. India Political Despatch No. 64 of 1 Decemer 1859.

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The Governor-General, however, insisted that the sanads should be issued by him only. As regards the election of a new ruler where the ruler died childless and without adopting a son, he declared, "if a chief is so little careful to provide a successor of his own choice as to neglect to adopt one during his life, it appears to me quite reasonable and in accordance with the established relations between the paramount power and the native states that the succession should lapse to the British Government. I have no doubt that the Government would in almost every case act wisely in re-establishing the chieftainship and in forbearing to take the territory to itself; but I am certain that the selection of the new chief would be more judiciously and disinterestedly made by the Government than by an association of kindred chiefs, and I believe that a selection so made would be quite as palatable to the people".³⁵

But as the Secretary of State had ordered compliance with the request, Canning proceeded to give effect to it without further delay. At a Durbar held at Ambala in January, 1860, he promised to Patiala, Jhind and Nabha the grant of a Sanad confirming to each and his heirs his possessions in perpetuity and all the privileges, and the recognition of their right on the failure of direct male heirs to adopt a successor from the Phoolkan family. But as regards the issue of a Sanad of perpetual guarantee from the Queen, he protested to the Secretary of State: "I do not think it politic that they should be encouraged to look for the intervention of the Queen's own hand in anything that is done for them. I think it very much wiser to invest the Government of India which is immediately before their eyes, and to which they may at any time be called upon to shew deference to obedience, with the fullest powers of representation and admonition which the forms of British Government will admit. I strongly deprecate leading the chiefs to think that when any substantial act of justice or favour is done to them, more force and sanctity will be given to the act by its being done in England than by its being done by the Queen's representative in India." There were also other objections, viz, if the request was granted to Patiala, how could it be refused to others? The same question would arise in the case of Sindia and Holkar and would be attended with still greater difficulties, for the request had reference not only to territory granted recently, but also to hereditary possessions. This difficulty will also arise in the case of smaller jagirdars whose states had been lately conferred by the Governor-General's sanads. Canning, therefore, recommended that "the Cis-Sutlej

35. Canuing-Wood, No. 9 of 28, Jan. 1860.

chiefs be answered to the effect that their possessions and rights are thoroughly secure under the guarantee and hand of the Queen's representative, with such repetition of the estimation in which their loyalty and services are held by Her Majesty as Her Majesty's Government may see fit. The Governor-General was also opposed to selection by the surviving chiefs in the event of one of them dying childless and without adopting an heir as it would create a precedent which was not recognised by the Government anywhere. Moreover, it might be used by them to aggrandise certain families. The levying of *nazarana*, he thought, would be extremely distasteful, not only financially but also because of the distinction it would make between the Cis-Sutlej chiefs and others who have been allowed to adopt without any such payment."³⁶

In view of the strong opinions expressed by Canning, the Secretary of State agreed that the selection should be made in consultation with the surviving chiefs, but wanted them to be distinctly informed that the British Government had no desire to aggrandise itself on ground of lapse. As the Governor-General had informed the three Cis-Sutlej states that the *nazarana* would not be levied, the Secretary of State approved of the measure, but ordered its levy in other cases.³⁷

The assurance which was given to the Cis-Sutlej States was now gradually extended to others. While the Governor-General was touring Central India and Upper India, he took every opportunity for formally declaring in open Durbar that the British Government desired to perpetuate those states which had helped it during the Mutiny. To Holkar, Sindia, Kashmir and Cis-Sutlej states it was publicly conveyed that adoption would be allowed in accordance with law and usage.³⁸ Canning was astonished at the effect produced by his announcement which was received with "expressions of joy like those on the birth of a Prince." Sindia told the Resident that "a cold wind had been blowing on him increasingly for years, from which he was now relieved."³⁹

The Secretary of State, while fully approving of this, warned the Governor-General that Indian Princes would regard this merely as a special act of reward, while those who did not receive this guarantee would become

36. Canning-Wood, No. 9 of 28, January 1860.

37. India Political Despatch No. 32 of 18, April 1860.

38. India Political Letter, No. 43A of 30 April 1860; India Foreign Letter No. 46 of 10 May 1860.

39. Torrens—Empire in Asia, 395.

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suspicious and perturbed.⁴⁰ The Governor-General, therefore, proposed that a more general measure of assurance should be given "for the final settlement of a question, which has long excited continual conflicts of opinion and some inconsistencies of practice, disturbing to the native mind." To every chief "above the rank of jagirdar, who governed his own territory, no matter how small it might be, or where it might be situated, or whence his authority over it might have been derived," an assurance was to be given that the paramount power desired no extension of territory at his expense and that on failure of male heirs he would be allowed to adopt a successor according to the law and customs of his race, so long as he and his descendants remained loyal to the Crown and faithfully observed the treaties with the British Government. The Secretary of State approved of this but ordered that in case of Mohammedan states no departure should be made from the law of primogeniture unless the ruler was childless. These decisions were to be notified to each individual ruler separately. In case of jagirdars no assurance was to be given except in special cases. "The distinction," the Secretary of State observed, "between territorial rights of ancient date and independent tenure, and lands held by favour of the Government of the day, as reward for service and generally granted only for a limited number of generations, is broad and intelligible. You will reserve to the Paramount state the right of dealing with such cases as they arise; and that your recommendations will be framed in a liberal spirit is the wish as it is the conviction of Her Majesty's Government." Further, "It is not by the extension of our Empire, that its permanence is to be secured, but by the character of British rule in the territories already committed to our care and by practically demonstrating that we are as willing to respect the rights of others as we are capable of maintaining our own."⁴¹

Thus originated the Sanads of Adoption which were separately issued to Chiefs and Princes. But the Sanads while giving the rulers the right of adoption, explicitly stated that no succession would be valid unless recognised by the paramount power, which in other words meant that even a normal succession by the natural heir would, in future, have to be sanctioned before it could be valid. This was an important departure from past theory and practice. The Company, while exercising all the prerogatives of paramount power had never claimed sovereignty over the States nor demanded allegiance from them. In fact a commercial concern could not

40. India Political Despatch No. 59 of 26, July 1860.

41. India Political Despatch, No. 59 of 26 July 1860.

do either. Although the Company had, on various occasions, interfered in regulating succession when its interests demanded it, it had never asserted that normal successions required its sanction. The new relationship as stressed in the Queen's Proclamation was thus given practical expression by the Sanads of Adoption.

In this place, it must be pointed out that the Sanads of Adoption were issued not merely to reward the Princes or to rectify a past injustice. Only a hint of the real motive was given in the official minute of the Governor-General. "The safety of our rule is increased, not diminished, by the maintenance of native chiefs well affected to us. Should the day come when India shall be threatened by an external enemy, or when the interests of England elsewhere may require that her Eastern Empire shall incur more than ordinary risk, one of our mainstays will be found in the Native States."⁴²

Canning was more explicit and frank in his private communication to Sir John Low. "I was not able to put into a despatch, which might have been public, *all* the reason that conduce to the policy which I have recommended..."

"A war in which France and Russia should be against us would bring an internal convulsion of the most perilous kind, unless we set our house in order while there is yet time. And the surest way of doing this is so to treat our native fellow subjects and the native Princes as to give them no inducement to intrigue against us, to convince them that they have nothing to gain, but much to lose, by every change in the Paramount Power in India, and so to bring them into that temper in which, when the danger comes, we may safely throw the reins on their necks, and trust to their maintaining their fidelity with a minimum of support from an English army.

"When the day of danger comes, our English army will have enough to do outside India."⁴³

The staunch loyalty shown and the signal services rendered by various Indian rulers during the Mutiny also called for some sort of special recognition by the Government. No sooner had the news of the suppression of the Mutiny reached England than the Directors had on 28 July, 1858.

42. Minute, 30 April 1860. Torrens—Empire in Asia, 358.

43. Ursula Low—Fifty Years with the John Company, 401—2.

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asked the Governor-General to furnish them with a list of the Princes to whom the Government was indebted, and to suggest how they should be rewarded. But before the Government's reply arrived, the Company had ceased to exist and the Secretary of State now asked the Governor-General to supply, in addition, reports about the Nizam, Sindia and Salar Jung. The home authorities were anxious to express their appreciation without any undue delay lest it would create mistrust.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Queen Victoria herself had become interested in the question of bestowing honours on the loyal Princes. The change of Government and the assumption of paramountcy by the Crown over the States, whose rulers were henceforth to be loyal in their allegiance to the Crown, had in theory created a new situation. Because, although the Company had exercised all the rights of a paramount power and treated the Indian Princes as protected vassals, yet being a Company of merchants composed of British subjects, it could never assume the same position of sovereignty as the Crown did, nor could it claim the right of bestowing honours on chiefs and Princes of India. So as early as May, 1859, the Queen wrote to Canning "for the foundation of a high Order of Chivalry" as "the means of gratifying the personal feelings of the chief number of the native princes, binding them together in a confraternity, and attaching them by a personal tie to the sovereign". This she declared to be "a subject in which she takes a personal interest". The Statute establishing the new Order, she thought, might be similar to those of the Garter, the Thistle, and the St. Patrick, the number of awards being restricted to 20 or 24. The Viceroy was to be the Grand Master and the Queen the Sovereign of the Order. The Viceroy was to invest the recipients in person and they were to do him personal homage. When a new member was invested—which was to be done on the anniversary of the assumption of the government by the Queen—all the other existing members were to be summoned. The Queen further wished to confer honorary knighthoods on Eastern potentates like the Shah of Persia, the King of Nepal and others as a means of extending influence over them.⁴⁵

Canning thought that since honours in India had hitherto been associated with substantial gifts in land or money, it was doubtful if mere bestowal of titles would be appreciated. He consulted leading men on the question and found much diversity of opinion. He, therefore, suggested

44. History of India.

45. Queen-Canning, 18 May 1859; Theodore Martin—Life of the Prince Consort, IV, 438-9.

that a high Order of Knighthood should be established with the Queen as the Sovereign to which the Princes and Chiefs of high distinction only should be admitted. Twenty he considered a sufficient number, foreign Princes being made honorary members. He, however, thought that distance, mutual jealousies, risk of quarrel among the retainers and the difficulty of satisfying ceremonial courtesy would make it difficult to assemble existing members together for the admission of new members. He also suggested that Englishmen should be admitted to the new Order on a limited scale as that would help to raise its dignity in the eyes of Indians.⁴⁶

In this last suggestion Canning was fully backed, if not influenced, by Outram, a member of his Council. Outram had even advocated the elevation of Indians to peerage and baronetcy.⁴⁷ But Canning was not prepared to go so far.

Meanwhile the matter had been taken up officially by the Government. The occasion was provided by the recommendation of the Chief Commissioner of Oudh for the conferment of K.C.B. on the Maharajah of Kapurthala, especially as he possessed a high degree of Western culture including a knowledge of English language and institutions and a high appreciation of English honours. The Governor-General, while favouring the suggestion was of the view that a K.C.B. could not be conferred on an Indian Prince. The Secretary of State also disapproved of the recommendation, but in view of the importance which Indian Princes attached to honours bestowed by the Crown and being desirous to keep alive that feeling, he asked the Government of India to suggest how best this could be effected.⁴⁸

The Governor-General replied that "it will be the best policy to adhere closely to the precise Titles already in use throughout India". He did not think it advisable "to attempt to invest new Titles or to modify the meaning and value of old ones". He also deprecated the introduction of any general rules as the same title meant differently in different parts and some titles current in certain parts were unknown in others. "All that is necessary," he observed, "as regards native Titles is, that the Crown of England should be understood to assume to itself the authority and to invest itself with the trust heretofore claimed by the Emperors of Hindoostan, over all their

46. Canning-Queen, 4 July, 1859; Martin-Prince Consort, IV, 440.

47. Minute, 28 June, 1859; F. J. Goldsmid—James Outram, II, 348-9.

48. India Political Despatch, No. 54 of 8 November, 1859.

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subjects and vassals, whether Mahomedan or Hindoo; but this authority should be exercised by the Crown's Representative in India, as in fact it has always been exercised by the Governor-General and that an official roll of all the rightful holders of the Titles should be kept by the Government of India. In short, that as little change as possible should be made in the practice which is already established excepting in the preservation of a more formal and authoritative record of Titles actually recognised or granted than any which at present exists."⁴⁹

Canning was against hereditary titles, because of the decadence of princely families and the absence of any law of primogeniture. He was also opposed to attaching land or money to titles, and hoped that "no intermixture of Eastern and Western Titles will take place, that Knight-hoods (unconnected with any order) Baronetages, Baronies and other Titles which are adapted to the Laws, Government and social condition of England will not be grafted into our Indian system, and that the English styles of "Sir" and "Lord" will not be prefixed to Indian names." "To say nothing of the incongruity of the conjunction," he added, "it is not our true object to denationalise India, and assuredly to create a new aristocracy, or titled class, would wear the appearance of desiring this." He believed that it would be a "sounder course, and more consonant...with the feeling of the people at large, if the Crown of England as the Paramount Power accepts and shews respect for Titles, and designations which have for many centuries and under various dynasties, prevailed through India, and is careful, through its representative, to make manifest that these Titles shall lose nothing of their dignity under the Crown's direct rule, and that they will be worthily and justly dispensed".⁵⁰

Canning wanted the rules to be as few as possible and agreed with the view of the Governor of Madras that there should be no over-systematization. He also accepted the suggestion of Trevelyan that all local titles should be awarded with the previous sanction of the Governor-General. This was not meant to be a check on the provincial Governments, whose recommendations were likely to be accepted in all cases, but because it was desirable that all titles should be derived from the same source and that source "should be as near to the fountain of all honour as can be conveniently provided".⁵¹

49. Ibid.

50. Governor-General—Secretary of State (For.) No. 27 of December, 1859.

51. Ibid.

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He, therefore, recommended the establishment of "a high order of Knighthood, of a single class, limited in number, and that divided according to a fixed rule, between Englishmen and Indian subjects, or feudatories of the Queen, who by good and loyal service rendered to the British Empire in India had deserved well of the Crown." "The Order," he suggested, "should consist of 12 to 15 Indians and not less than 12 Englishmen. Not more than 1/3 of the English members should be serving the Crown at any time. This was necessary to guard against a filling up of the whole number at once, the result of which would be that in a few years, owing to the conditions of service, all the European recipients would have left India, and there would be no Englishmen left in the country until vacancies occurred by death among those who had returned home with such honours. This was to be avoided as far as possible and the chiefs were to have before them Englishmen holding the same honour. Canning was also of opinion that only persons of the highest rank should be eligible for the title.⁵²

Besides the more important Princes, there were other chiefs, officers, ministers and officers of States, wealthy landowners and proprietors to whom also recognition had to be extended. So, the Governor-General recommended the institution of a separate order of a more general scope, but only after the higher one had been well established; otherwise its value would be diminished and it would be thought that honours were being cheaply given. This lower Order was to be divided into at least two grades, the number of each being limited and being open to Indians and Europeans alike. There was, however, to be no pecuniary award attached to any of them.⁵³

The Queen objected to giving the Viceroy "illimited power" in this matter. The highest dignities and titles, she firmly declared, "ought to proceed directly from the Crown." She also expressed the view that "where Princes (as we may hope will be the case sometimes hereafter) have become Christians, the hereditary nature of honours should not be withheld".⁵⁴ The exact title of the new Order created a good deal of difficulty. Sir Frederick Currie and Sir John Lawrence after consulting leading Indians of experience suggested "The Star of Honour of England and India" or "The Eastern Star of Honour." Canning pointed out to Sir Charles Wood that it was necessary to come to a quick decision on this matter.

52. Governor-General—Secretary of State (For.) No. 27 of 24 December, 1859.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Queen-Canning, 9 February, 1860; Letters of Queen Victoria, Ed. Benson and Isher, III, 493-4.

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At this stage Prince Albert became interested in the subject and Wood referred the question of designation to him.⁵⁵

The Prince preferred the latter but felt that both seemed to have been copied from the French Legion of Honour. This, he thought, would depreciate other British honours. Napoleon had intended the Legion of Honour for an aristocracy which the Revolution had abolished and he meant it to be the only honour for Frenchmen. Further, the names suggested were the denominations of the Decoration rather than the name of the Order. He suggested having Order of the Eastern Star, just as Sweden had an Order of the North Star. This had a special attraction for him as he explained: "The Eastern Star preceded the Three Kings or Wise Men, when they did homage to the Infant Christ and may be taken as the emblem of dawning Christianity." Further, "The Orders of Knighthood are peculiar to that portion of the Middle Ages, when Christian chivalry mixed with Eastern custom in the Crusades. All later Orders are mere imitations, and it is in the feelings of those days (not inapplicable to our position in India) that we must look for inspirations." The Prince also gave details of the model and how the new Order should work. He wanted the dove to be included as "Emblem of Peace (for us, that of the Holy Ghost)," while he ruled out the Lotus as exclusively Hindu, and not acknowledged by the Mohammedans.⁵⁶

Canning objected to the designation suggested by the Prince. The Hindusthani equivalent of Eastern Star, he pointed out was Poorbeah Sittara, and Poorbeah was a generic name for Sepoys, most of whom came from the eastern part of India and during the Mutiny was used to designate mutineers. But the main objection was that in India, the further one came from the east, the less was he respected, and Poorbeah was a word of disparagement. Frere held the same view.⁵⁷

So, a battle royal raged over the name of the new Order. Alternatives like Western Star, Celestial Star, The Star of Peace and British Star were suggested only to be rejected. There was general agreement about The Star of India and England, but the Lord Chancellor, Campbell, objected on the ground that this would exclude Scotland and Ireland and that would be unfair to Dalhousie and many others.⁵⁸

55. Wood-Prince, 15 May 1860; Martin, IV, 101.

56. Prince Consort-Wood, 16 May, 1860; Martin, IV, 101-3.

57. Canning-Wood, 3 November, 1860; Ibid, 104.

58. Martin, IV, 104.

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The selection of a new name became so difficult that at one stage the Prince in despair wrote to Wood, "I might be inclined to give it the sign and name of a house at Toplitz—the sign bearing gilt figures of men rowing against a rock, with the title of "The Golden Impossibility."⁵⁹

At last on February 23, 1861, "The Most Exalted Order of the Star of India" was established and most of the suggestions made by the Prince regarding its insignia were accepted.⁶⁰ The Order was to consist of 25 knights, both European and Indian, exclusive of honorary knights, with the Sovereign as the Grand Master. The first investiture was held at Windsor on 1 November 1861, the recipients being Maharajah Dalip Sing, Lord Clyde, Sir John Lawrence, General Pollock and Lord Harris.⁶¹

Apart from bestowing honours, the question of offering material rewards was also taken up. The loyal members of the Imperial family at the Durbar held at Benares, were given the same privileges which they had enjoyed before. But it was distinctly understood that the favour was granted personally to them and would not be continued to their descendants or representatives. The Secretary of State, while fully approving of it, observed, "It is desirable that all traces of the Imperial House pass away and though it would be ungenerous to visit upon the unoffending members, the offences committed by their kinsmen, there would be as little humanity as policy in prolonging the existence of this fiction of royalty a day longer than you are necessitated to do so by a consideration of existing claims."⁶²

To reward Sindia for his loyalty, even after his army had joined the mutineers and perhaps to soothe the resentful attitude which he subsequently adopted, the Government of India decided to transfer to him territories in Jhansi. The Government also wanted to take advantage of this occasion to lay down the basis of a new arrangement with him. The principles were⁶³ to provide against the necessity for annual adjustment of accounts,⁶⁴ to make such exchanges and transfer of territory as shall provide a suitable reward for him and at the same time give him what he could administer in full

59. Prince Consort-Wood, 9 January, 1861; *Ibid*, 104.

60. Martin, IV, f.n. 104.

61. Martin, IV, 441.

62. India Foreign Letter, No. 2 of 20 December, 1860; India Political Despatch, No. 31 of 2 March, 1860.

63. India Foreign Letter, No. 2 of 20 December, 1860; India Political Despatch, No. 31 of 2 March, 1860.

64. India Political Despatch, No. 16 of 8 February, 1861; G.G.s. For. Let. No. 4, 1859.

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sovereignty and provide both parties with a well-defined and convenient boundary,⁶⁵ leave to the British Government only a general obligation to provide military protection to Sindia and his territory without specifying the character of such obligation and the number of troops to be maintained or the place of their location or the limits of their employment, which were to depend upon the general arrangements of the paramount power.⁶⁶ A treaty on these lines was accordingly concluded after protracted negotiations to replace the existing one concluded in 1844. Sindia was allowed to increase his force to 5,000 cavalry, 6,000 infantry and 36 guns.⁶⁷ Sindia wanted Gwalior back; but this was not complied with, because from it, his troops could, if they so wished, threaten the British post at Morar. Canning, however, promised its return "when this could be safely done".⁶⁸

With Sindia the arrangements were of a reciprocal nature. But others materially rewarded were not asked to give anything in return. The ruler of Kapurthala was given a *Khilat* of Rs. 10,000, sanctioned a salute of 16 guns, given a freehold garden and two forfeited estates in Oudh, and his honorary titles were increased.⁶⁹

The Nizam got back a large slice of territory that his father had to hand over to Dalhousie in 1853. Besides he got Naldrug, Daraseo, Raichur and Shorapur. His debt amounting to half a million sterling was also remitted. In addition, he was presented with a jewelled sword and a diamond ring. His ministers Salar Jung and Shams-ul-Umara were each given gifts valued at £ 3,000.⁷⁰

The rulers of Balarampur, Rampur, Benares and many Sikh States got shares of the confiscated territories.⁷¹

The Maharajah of Patiala was given the titles Farzand Khas or the Choicest Son, and Mansar Zaman or the Conqueror of the World. The ruler of Jhind was greeted as the Most Cherished Son of the True Faith

65. Thornton—Life of Meade, 89.

66. India Political Despatch, No. 16 of 8 February, 1861; G.G.s. Foreign Letter, No. 4, 1859.

67. Thornton—Life of Meade, 89.

68. *Ibid.*, 115.

69. India Political Despatch, No. 54 of 8 November, 1859.

70. L. J. Trotter—History of India under Queen Victoria, II, 114-5.

71. *Ibid.*, 117.

and had his salute of guns raised; the ruler of Nabha was given the title of the Noble Son of Good Faith and allowed a salute of 9 guns. Each of these rulers also got a share of the confiscated territory, Patiala's share yielding 2 lacs a year.⁷²

The abolition of the Imperial title and the assumption of administration by the Queen necessitated a change in the coinage of the Indian states which still went on having the Mughal emperor's name on their coins. In fact, the Company itself had been responsible for maintaining the fiction of Mughul supremacy and had even issued their own coins in the name of the emperor until 1835. While the Mutiny was still raging, this question had been taken up by the authorities in India. In January 1858, Nixon, the officiating Political Agent to Bhurtpore, had asked the permission of the Agent to the Governor-General to remove the name of the "arch traitor of Delhi" from Bhurtpore coins and substitute that of the British Government.⁷³ Lawrence was willing, but wanted to make a reference to the Governor-General before carrying it out.⁷⁴ The Governor-General expressed the view that "owing to the minority of the chief of Bhurtpore, the authority of the Political Agent is greater than usual in that State, but it is very necessary that all acts of authority should be done in unison with the Durbar". He, therefore, directed that if the state authorities were willing, the reform could be carried out.⁷⁵

Nixon had also drawn attention to the same state of affairs at Dholpur and he was now asked "to bear in mind that the British Government has no right to give order in this matter, and that any assumption of authority by its agents in regard to the prerogative of coining which the independent states of Rajpootana and Central India so jealously maintain is likely to defeat its purpose, other changes besides a change of device in the currency of Native States, are very desirable and it is important that the chiefs should be led to adopt them willingly".⁷⁶ It must be remembered that this happened before the assumption of administration by the Queen.

72. Ibid, 114.

73. Nixon-Lawrence, 27 January, 1858; India Foreign Congress, 147 of 24 September, 1858.

74. Lawrence-Nixon, 3 February, 1858; Ibid, 148.

75. Edmonstone-Lawrence, 20 February, 1858; Ibid. 149.

76. Edmonstone-Lawrence, 20 February, 1858; India Foreign Congress, 149 of 24 September, 1858

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The Government of India, however, asked its Political Agents in Rajpootana and Central India to find out how many chiefs used the emperor's name on their coins and how they would take the proposed change.⁷⁷ Similar enquiries were also made from the Residents at Baroda and Hyderabad.⁷⁸

Lawrence, the Political Agent in Rajpootana, reported that the states under his jurisdiction, with very few exceptions, retained the Emperor's name, but he thought that they would readily agree to replace it with the name of the British Government.⁷⁹ He was asked to submit a report, and he reported that he had consulted the vakeels of the rulers and they were all agreeable to the proposed change. They wished to have on one side of the coin the name of the state and of the ruler and on the other whatever the British Government wanted.⁸⁰

The Government, however, informed Lawrence that he should have communicated directly with the rulers and that "the British Government claim no right to give orders in this matter, and that the most it can do is to submit the proposal to the several chiefs leaving it to them, if they consent to determine the device which the future currency of their states should bear and the time when as well as the means by which they shall call in the current coin."⁸¹

The Political Agent at Jaipur had a private interview with the Maharajah and the latter expressed a desire to recall all the current coins and to recoin them either bearing on one side the impression of Queen Victoria and on the other his own name and regnal year or on one side simply A.D. 1858 and on the other his own name and regnal year. W. F. Eden, the Agent, thought the latter would suffice and suggested that the best thing would be to leave the choice to the ruler.⁸² This met with the Governor-General's approval.⁸³

77. Edmonstone-Agent, Governor-General, Rajpootana, 18 February, 1858; India Foreign Congress, 69 of 9 April, 1858.

78. Ibid-Agent, C. I. Ibid, Ibid, No. 70.

79. Lawrence-Edmonstone, 26 March, Ibid, No. 152.

80. Ibid, 20 May, India Foreign Congress, No. 159.

81. Edmonstone-Lawrence, 29 July, Ibid, 163.

82. Eden-Lawrence, 28 January, Ibid, 146.

83. Edmonstone-Lawrence, 20 February, Ibid, 149.

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In the meantime, the ruler of Jaipur had substituted the name of Queen Victoria on his coins,⁸⁴ and the ruler of Bikaner had also signified his willingness to do the same.⁸⁵

The Nizam's minister, when the proposal was put to him, replied that he anticipated no difficulty to effect the change.⁸⁶

The Political Agent in Central India reported that Holkar had agreed to remove the name of the Emperor and had given him a specimen of the new coin. Bhopal also readily agreed and forwarded a specimen.⁸⁷

The Rao of Cutch, who had offered to substitute the Queen's name as early as 1845, now expressed his determination to do the same.⁸⁸

The Resident at Baroda reported that the minister had agreed to discontinue the Emperor's name and to use the Gaekwar's name only in future.⁸⁹ He also forwarded to the Government the new die which was approved.⁹⁰

The Secretary of State warmly approved of these changes but regretted that this opportunity had not been taken to suggest to the Princes the use of the Queen's name and thus an occasion had been missed of denoting that the sovereignty of India was vested in the Crown of England. He also wanted an attempt to be made to introduce as far as possible a currency of uniform value and to withdraw all debased ones.⁹¹

In matters of etiquette, the Government of India tried to accommodate the wishes of the Princes. When during the Mutiny, the Gaekwar expressed a desire that the two karbarces, Govind Rao and Ganesh Pant, should be given the compliment of a salute of presented arms from the guard stationed at the Residency gate, the Resident recommended to be authorised

84. Lawrence-Edmonstone, 14 June, 1858; India Foreign Congress, 160 of 24 September, 1858.

85. Ibid, 29 June, 1858; Ibid, 161.

86. Davidson-Edmonstone, 6 March, 1858; India Foreign Congress, 96 of 6 August, 1858.

87. Hamilton-Edmonstone, 11 April, 1858; India Foreign Control, 164 of 30 April, 1858.

88. Trevelyan-Anderson, 12 October, 1858; Coll. to Pol. Desp. Vol. 6 pp. 2—4.

89. Shakespear-Edmonstone, 13 March, 1858; India Foreign Control, 88 of 6 August, 1858.

90. Ibid, 28 March, Ibid, 89; Edmonstone-Shakespear, 29 July, Ibid, 90.

91. India Political Despatch, No. 39 of 15 September, 1859.

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to inform the Gaekwar that the request would be complied with if he made a formal written application, for he thought that this would greatly strengthen his hands "at the present crises" and also gratify the Maharajah as well as show respect to the chief functionaries of the state who had demonstrated an anxious desire to meet the Resident's wishes and on whose prudence and foresight he mainly depended. This was approved.⁹²

In matters of interference in the internal affairs of states, there was also a change in British policy. Early in 1857, one Batoor Khan had petitioned the Political Agent at Bhopal accusing the regent Secunder Begum of ordering Meer Omar Ali Khan to dismantle his house and of taking possession of it. The Agent found the accusation exaggerated but promised to afford redress if the explanation sought was not satisfactory.⁹³

Soon a change of policy came. When the Gaekwar decided to levy one or half a year's salary from his officers as *nazarana* on the occasion of his accession and two European officers in his employ complained to the Resident Sir Richard Shakespear about it, the latter informed the Gaekwar that this step should not be taken without the sanction of the Governor-General. The Government of India on hearing of it, communicated to the Resident that it was too much for him to declare, that a general measure applicable to all public servants, Indians as well as Europeans, required the sanction of the Governor-General, although he should do all in his power to deter the Durbar from an imposition so unjust, unusual and odious.⁹⁴

When the Maharajah of Bhurtpore died in 1853, the Political Agent Major Morison was appointed to conduct the administration during the minority of the ruler Jeswant Sing. The Governor-General ordered that it should be a "native administration" controlled and influenced by the friendly advice of the Political Agent. Sir Henry Lawrence also pointed out to Morison that it would be his duty "to carry out the administration as a good enlightened native ruler would do, and by personal example and kindly advice train and bring up the chief and officers of the state in the principle of good government so that the beneficial effect of our interference should endure". He added that "under a different system what might be

92. India Foreign Congress, 14-18 of 31 July, 1857 and 52-55 of 25 September, 1857; India Foreign Letter, 18 of 22 March, 1858.

93. India Foreign Letter, No. 2 of 9 January, 1858.

94. India Foreign Letter, No. 2 of 9 January, 1858.

in itself very good, would be as unpalatable as unintelligible and at best the good effects of the administration under the minority would pass away with the departure of the British Political Agent from Bhurtpore.”⁹⁵

Major Morison, however, disapproved of Indian Agency and even recommended its withdrawal. He wanted to have full authority and to work “with his own instruments”. Later on, he agreed to a compromise, i.e. if the Indian agency failed, he was to administer the state himself, but through Indian officers and making no change that was not absolutely necessary and always bearing in mind that the state would be restored to the ruler when he came of age. But, as the conduct of Morison did not prove satisfactory, the Agent to the Governor-General, Lawrence, was asked to report. Lawrence reported that though Morison intended to work in good faith, “he had been the cavilling censor rather than the friendly adviser”. He distrusted every member of the old government and wanted to bring Indian officers from British territory. He considered every Indian officer a “rogue,” yet had succumbed to the influence of the Deputy Agent Syfoollah who had been sent to his assistance, “seeing with his eyes and hearing with his ears”. Although Lawrence had advised that the Deputy should be assigned some particular work and not be permitted to have any voice in Durbar matters, yet Morison had put him in charge of the treasury and given him control over all the officers. Morison had also utterly disregarded the restrictions on spending put upon him and had been building various public works without sanction and had even started building a large house for the Deputy out of public funds, while the much needed Poor House, Hospital, Jail etc. had not yet been completed. Nothing had also been done to improve jail conditions although the Agent had been drawing his attention for the past three years.⁹⁶

In addition, Morison’s ways were harsh and uncompromising. Under the influence of the Deputy, he had allowed houses to be pulled down, crops to be destroyed by new roads, wells to be cut off from fields by the same means, while no prompt and liberal compensation had been paid although he had been emphatically ordered to do so.⁹⁷

In judicial matters, Morison put off suitors with a promise that they would be heard when a law court was established, although the old court was still in existence. He resisted the Agent’s suggestion and opposed the

95. India Foreign Letter, No. 2 of 9 January, 1858.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid.

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appointment of the old Dewan as the chief judge, the restoration of the old magistrate and the appointment of another in a similar capacity to Deeg, even when he could not find better substitutes. Moreover, Morison had furnished no adequate general or judicial reports even when called upon to do so a long time ago. Under the influence of his Deputy and one Har Sewak, the only officer of the old Durbar whom he did not consider a rogue, he had opposed every measure of financial relief to the people although all the other officers of the old Durbar urged its immediate need. Lawrence, therefore, on his own authority, carried out a summary land revenue settlement in a part of the state at a reduction of the government by 14%-15%, but Morison disdainfully described it as a deliberate and wanton sacrifice of state revenue. Lawrence entrusted the completion of the settlement to Captain Nixon, but Morison opposed him. Morison was also found guilty of irregularities in keeping official records and misrepresenting Lawrence's views and instructions. In short, his conduct was such that he was unreservedly condemned by all his superiors. Lawrence, therefore, recommended that Morison's power should be reduced to that of a Collector and Magistrate and that he should be directed to consult the Durbar officials in discharge of his duty. As a result, Morison was removed and his services were placed at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief.⁹⁸

A similar case occurred in Alwar, where Lieutenant Impey virtually set aside the authority of the Regency Council and took over the administration in his own hands. Although this was contrary to the Government's instruction, Impey went on in a dictatorial manner and dismissing the tutor of the minor ruler, took over his duties himself. The Governor-General disapproved of this and ordered the appointment of an Indian tutor.⁹⁹

This policy of non-interference was further illustrated when the Government refused to entertain a complaint against the Rajah of Gharwal by a relation of his on the ground that the ruler was independent within his territory, and this was fully approved by the Secretary of State.¹⁰⁰

But non-interference had its limits and there were cases where the British authorities had to intervene. When the Rajah of Mundee began to keep bad company and the administration began to suffer, the Political Agent expelled the chief of the undesirable companions, Shib Shunkar,

98. Ibid.

99. India Political Despatch, No. 46 of 25 March, 1861.

100. India Political Despatch, No. 76 of 29 September, 1860.

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and his sons and ordered the dismissal of Wazir Gosain if he failed to effect improvements in administration. The Secretary of State not only endorsed this but observed that the British Government could not be indifferent to the improvement of the Rajah's character and that "no means even to the extent of his temporary removal from Mundee, should be left untried to bring it about."¹⁰¹

The Rajah of Molcem, Hazar Sing, instead of residing in his state lived in Chera Punji, while the administration was neglected and his underlings oppressed the people. The Bengal Government, therefore, called upon the ruler to go back to his state and attend to his duties, and warned him that otherwise British protection would be withdrawn. As he did not comply with this order, and the chief inhabitants of Molcem petitioned the Assistant Commissioner for his deposition, he was replaced by Malay Sing, who had to accept certain conditions laid down by the Government as the price of his elevation to the *gādi*. The Secretary of State ordered that *nazarana* should be levied from him.¹⁰²

When the Rani of Chinhoree, who had been appointed regent, tried to interfere in administration, she was at first warned. But when this produced no effect, she was removed.¹⁰³

Similarly, the ruler of Serohi was replaced by his eldest son Omcid Sing, due to age and infirmity.¹⁰⁴

Although the smaller and unimportant states were dealt with in rather summary manner, the larger ones had to be treated with greater caution and consideration. This happened in the case of Sindia. Although Sindia had remained staunchly loyal during the Mutiny, in spite of the defection of his troops, his attitude had become resentful after the assumption of the sovereignty by the Queen. He, soon after, took over the administration of his state directly and dismissed his minister Dinkar Rao, who had long governed the state ably in his name. He also showed some unwillingness to fulfil the obligations undertaken by his government while he, himself, was under tutelage on the ground that he was not a free agent.

101. India Foreign Letter, No. 130 of 22 August, 1861; India Political Despatch, No. 129 of 29 November, 1861.

102. India Political Despatch, No. 139 of 16 December, 1861.

103. India Foreign Letter, No. 91 of 8 July, 1861; India Political Despatch, No. 121 of 31 October, 1861.

104. India Foreign Letter, No. 135 of 7 September, 1861; India Political Despatch, No. 132 of 1861.

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Meade, Agent to the Governor-General, drew the latter's attention to Sindia's attitude and expressed the apprehension that he was trying to evade the promises made after the recovery of Gwalior to assign jagirs from the Amjhera state as rewards to Dinkar Rao and other officers who had remained faithful. The would-be beneficiaries often complained that Sindia was excusing himself by saying that he was waiting to see first what reward he himself was getting from the British for his services. The acting Agent Shakespear advised them to wait until after Sindia's interview with the Governor-General.¹⁰⁵

But Meade feared that Sindia's object was to repudiate the promises altogether and this was to be the first of a series of repudiations of other undertakings. The Governor-General, therefore, asked Meade to inform Sindia very kindly but very firmly that repudiation of formal engagements would seriously compromise him. They might be modified but not repudiated. Believing that a ruler of Sindia's character must be restrained by the fear of losing the respect of the British Government, he informed the Agent that "strongly averse as he is to interfere in the internal affairs of a Native State, the Governor-General is not prepared to pass over in silence the disregard of promises which were made under the encouragement of the Government of India if such disregard become open and persistent."¹⁰⁶

Soon after, Meade reported that Sindia had stated in a private Durbar that sanads for Amjhera jagirs should be drawn out and possession given as soon as the territory yielding 3 lakhs of rupees a year which had been promised to him by the British was made over to him. The Vakeel who was a grantee wanted this to be done quickly so that Sindia might not have any further excuse. Meade, however, conveyed the Governor-General's sentiments to Sindia, who as was expected, agreed to fulfil his promise; but bitterly complained that since 1844 he had give away territory yielding $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of rupees in jagir and as he was not able to extend his territories by conquest, the proposed grant would only impoverish him further. Soon after, Sindia in an open Durbar granted sanads for lands as promised. The amount was the same but was divided among a larger number of beneficiaries.¹⁰⁷

105. India Foreign Letter, No. 174 of 19 November, 1860.

106. India Foreign Letter, No. 174 of 19 November, 1860; India Political Despatch, No. 55 of 8 April, 1861.

107. *Ibid.*

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The question of Dewanship still remained unsettled. The British would have liked the reinstatement of Dinkar Rao. But Meade reported that one Hurnath Rao was intriguing to become Dewan himself and he feared that if he succeeded, he would reintroduce *nazarana* and this would be fatal to Dinkar Rao's system which was based on the principle that on the payment of the stipulated amount, the landlords would be exempted from any further demand.¹⁰⁸

The Secretary of State, however, viewed the situation in a different light. He expressed pleasure that Sindia was taking interest in administration and informed the Governor-General, "In affording the Maharajah every reasonable encouragement to interest himself personally in the affairs of his principality... Her Majesty's Government will ever regard with great dissatisfaction the maintenance of a policy tending to induce any minister, however great his ability, to look beyond the legitimate authority of his own master. The very worst description of interference is that which encourages the officers of the Durbar, secure in the support of the representative of the British, to regard their own sovereign as little more than a puppet or a name."¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile the Agent, realising how intensely Sindia disliked his former minister, had informed him that he would not insist on the minister's reinstatement, but would like his dismissal to be made public in such a manner as would demonstrate that his services were appreciated by the Maharajah. Sindia in return had assured Meade that he wanted Dinkar Rao to be near him and would consult him when necessary. The Deputy Dewan Balaji Pant Chinnaji was then appointed to the vacant position and although old and not particularly able, he was thoroughly acquainted with Dinkar Rao's system of administration and more than any one else likely to maintain it. He, however, became merely a puppet as Sindia kept the administration in his own hands. This was undoubtedly the reason for Sindia's unwillingness to have Dinkar back, since, if he was re-appointed he would have dominated the state and Sindia would hardly have had any share in its government.¹¹⁰

When informed of the new arrangements, the Secretary of State expressed the view that the matter had been settled in a manner "least likely

108. Ibid.

109. India Political Despatch No. 16 of 8 February, 1861.

110. India Foreign Letter, No. 174 of 19 November, 1861; India Political Despatch, No. 55 of April, 1861.

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to cause future embarrassments” and hoped that “aided by the good influence of the British agent” it would “conduce to the tranquility and prosperity of the State”.¹¹¹

Another aspect of British policy remains to be considered, namely, British jurisdiction in Indian states. Two incidents would suffice to illustrate how British policy was relaxed in this respect. The Rajah of Rewa in 1857 claimed jurisdiction over one of his subjects who had been charged with assaulting a follower of the Political Agent, Lieutenant Osborne, who resisted the Rajah’s claim and reported the matter to the Government. In reply, he was informed that if the accused was simply a subject of the ruler, the Political Agent was wrong in resisting his claim, but if he was also a follower of his, then he could claim jurisdiction over him.¹¹²

In 1857, when the Mutiny was at its height, the Madras Government asked the opinion of the Government of India about the suppression of objectionable publications that might be issued from presses in Indian states and in reply they were informed that nothing could be done against any such publications except to seize them when they were brought into British territory and to punish the importer. But the Government of India had no objection to the Princes being requested to prevent such publications.¹¹³

The policy of Canning, during whose administration the change in British policy took place and who was intimately connected with it, was explained by his successor Lord Elgin, himself an eminent administrator and diplomat, having served in turn as Governor of Jamaica, Governor-General of Canada, Envoy to China and lastly as Viceroy of India, in the following terms: “—like most wise administrators, Canning dealt with the concrete rather than the abstract—Canning never intended to let the chiefs get the bit into their mouths, or to lose his hold over them. It is true that he rode them with a loose rein, but the pace was so killing during the whole of his time, that it took the kick out of them and a light hand and silken thread were all that was required. His policy of deference to the authority of the native chiefs was a means to an end—being the establishment of the British Raj in India; and when the means and ends came into conflict, or seemed likely to do so, the former went to the wall.”¹¹⁴

111. India Political Despatch, No. 55 of April, 1861.

112. India Foreign Letter, No. 32 of 17 May, 1858.

113. *Ibid.*

114. W. J. Walrond—Letters and Journals of James, Eighth Earl of Elgin, 422-3.

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It must also be borne in mind that Canning's policy stiffened as time went on. In the early stages, i.e. during the Mutiny and immediately after it, when he tried to undo the mischiefs of the past, he showed an undoubtedly more liberal attitude towards the Indian Princes than he did at a later stage when the British Government found itself once more strong enough to tighten the reins which policy had dictated it to loosen, and this was demonstrated in his policy towards Serohi, Mundee, Molecm and Chinhoore and to some extent towards Sindia.

The change in British policy produced reactions, not always favourable, among the Princes. The Queen's Proclamation, the first official pronouncement of the changed policy, was hailed by them. Sir Salar Jung, the chief minister of Hyderabad, took the view that it "conferred additional rights on the Native Princes," although this was denied by the British Resident.¹¹⁵

But the new Order of the Star of India was not, at first, graciously accepted by the Princes. Some of its conditions were not palatable to them, especially to the Mahommedan Princes. Objections were also raised by some of those first selected for the honour, so much so that Canning was perturbed. Sir Henry Durand, the Foreign Secretary, wrote to Ellenborough on this occasion, "It was very nearly a misfire, and a scandal, the chiefs seem to think that they confer rather than receive a favour when they accept the Order."¹¹⁶ Before the first investiture Durbar was held in India Sindia adopted a rather hostile attitude, put forward extravagant demands and was in such a bad temper that Sir Bartle Frere had to spend "a good part of a day between Lord Canning's tent and his". Ultimately, "he thawed, and he went away in the best of humours".¹¹⁷

The liberal policy pursued by Canning in the beginning created an unusually pretentious attitude among some of the Princes and some of them even resented the issue of the Sanads of Adoption as a sign of British sovereignty, while some others claimed "something very like a position of equality with the British Crown". One of the Central Indian Princes even went so far as to express a desire to address a letter to the Queen as "affectionate friend and ally".¹¹⁸ Needless to say, this tendency was firmly suppressed.

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115. Sir Richard Temple and R. C. Temple—Hyderabad, Sikkim, Kashmir and Nepal, I, 104.

116. H. M. Durand—Life of Major-General Sir Henry Marion Durand, I, 287.

117. Martineau-Bartle Frere, I, 378, f.n. 378.

118. Durand-Durand, I, 300.