

EAST INDIA (PROCLAMATIONS).



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RETURN to an Address of the Honourable The House of Commons,  
dated 9 November 1908 :—for,

“COPIES of the PROCLAMATION of the KING, EMPEROR OF INDIA, to the PRINCES and PEOPLES of INDIA, of the 2nd day of November 1908, and the PROCLAMATION of the late QUEEN VICTORIA of the 1st day of November 1858, to the PRINCES, CHIEFS, and PEOPLE of INDIA.”

India Office,  
13 November 1908. }

ARTHUR GODLEY,  
Under Secretary of State for India.

(*Mr. Eugene Wason.*)

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,  
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PROCLAMATION by the QUEEN IN COUNCIL to the PRINCES,  
CHIEFS, and PEOPLE of INDIA (published by the GOVERNOR-GENERAL at  
ALLAHABAD, November 1st, 1858).

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Colonies and Dependencies thereof in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australasia, Queen, Defender of the Faith.

Whereas, for divers weighty reasons, We have resolved, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, to take upon Ourselves the Government of the Territories in India heretofore administered in trust for Us by the Honorable East India Company :

Now, therefore, We do by these Presents notify and declare that, by the advice and consent aforesaid, We have taken upon Ourselves the said Government ; and We hereby call upon all Our Subjects within the said Territories to be faithful, and to bear true Allegiance to Us, Our Heirs, and Successors, and to submit themselves to the authority of those whom We may hereafter, from time to time, see fit to appoint to administer the Government of Our said Territories, in Our name and on Our behalf :

And We, reposing especial trust and confidence in the loyalty, ability, and judgment of Our right trusty and well beloved Cousin and Councillor, Charles John Viscount Canning, do hereby constitute and appoint him, the said Viscount Canning, to be Our first Viceroy and Governor-General in and over Our said Territories, and to administer the Government thereof in Our name, and generally to act in Our name and on Our behalf, subject to such Orders and Regulations as he shall, from time to time, receive from Us through one of Our Principal Secretaries of State :

And We do hereby confirm in their several Offices, Civil and Military, all Persons now employed in the Service of the Honorable East India Company, subject to Our future pleasure, and to such Laws and Regulations as may hereafter be enacted.

We hereby announce to the Native Princes of India that all Treaties and Engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Honorable East India Company are by Us accepted, and will be scrupulously maintained ; and We look for the like observance on their part.

We desire no extension of Our present territorial Possessions ; and while We will permit no aggression upon Our Dominions or Our Rights, to be attempted with impunity, We shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the Rights, Dignity, and Honour of Native Princes as Our own ; and We desire that they, as well as Our own Subjects, should enjoy that Prosperity and that social Advancement which can only be secured by internal Peace and good Government.

We hold Ourselves bound to the Natives of Our Indian Territories by the same obligations of Duty which bind Us to all Our other Subjects ; and those Obligations, by the Blessing of Almighty God, We shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

Firmly relying Ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of Religion, We disclaim alike the Right and the Desire to impose our Convictions on any of Our Subjects. We declare it to be Our Royal Will and Pleasure that none be in any wise favored, none molested or disquieted by reason of their Religious Faith or Observances ; but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the Law : and We do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under Us, that they abstain from all interference with the Religious Belief or Worship of any of Our Subjects, on pain of Our highest Displeasure.

And it is Our further Will that, so far as may be, Our Subjects, of whatever Race or Creed, be freely and impartially admitted to Offices in Our Service, the Duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge.

We know, and respect, the feelings of attachment with which the Natives of India regard the Lands inherited by them from their Ancestors ; and We desire to protect them in all Rights connected therewith, subject to the equitable demands of the State ; and We will that generally, in framing and administering the Law, due regard be paid to the ancient Rights, Usages, and Customs of India.

We deeply lament the evils and misery which have been brought upon India by the acts of ambitious Men, who have deceived their Countrymen, by false reports, and led them into open Rebellion. Our Power has been shewn by the Suppression of that Rebellion in the field; We desire to shew Our Mercy, by pardoning the Offences of those who have been thus misled, but who desire to return to the path of Duty.

Already in one Province, with a view to stop the further effusion of blood, and to hasten the Pacification of Our Indian Dominions, Our Viceroy and Governor-General has held out the expectation of Pardon, on certain terms, to the great majority of those who, in the late unhappy Disturbances, have been guilty of Offences against our Government, and has declared the Punishment which will be inflicted on those whose Crimes place them beyond the reach of forgiveness. We approve and confirm the said act of Our Viceroy and Governor-General, and do further announce and proclaim as follows :—

Our Clemency will be extended to all Offenders, save and except those who have been, or shall be, convicted of having directly taken part in the Murder of British Subjects. With regard to such, the Demands of Justice forbid the exercise of mercy.

To those who have willingly given asylum to Murderers, knowing them to be such, or who may have acted as leaders or instigators in Revolt, their lives alone can be guaranteed; but in apportioning the Penalty due to such Persons, full consideration will be given to the circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off their allegiance; and large indulgence will be shewn to those whose Crimes may appear to have originated in too credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing Men.

To all others in Arms against the Government, We hereby promise unconditional Pardon, Amnesty, and Oblivion of all Offence against Ourselves, Our Crown and Dignity, on their return to their homes and peaceful pursuits.

It is Our Royal Pleasure that these Terms of Grace and Amnesty should be extended to all those who comply with their Conditions before the First Day of January next.

When, by the Blessing of Providence, internal Tranquillity shall be restored, it is Our earnest Desire to stimulate the peaceful Industry of India, to promote Works of Public Utility and Improvement, and to administer its Government for the benefit of all Our Subjects resident therein. In their Prosperity will be Our Strength; in their Contentment Our Security; and in their Gratitude Our best Reward. And may the God of all Power grant to Us, and to those in authority under Us, Strength to carry out these Our Wishes for the good of Our people.

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PROCLAMATION of the KING-EMPEROR to the PRINCES and  
PEOPLES of INDIA, read by HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY in DURBAR at  
JODHPUR on the 2nd November, 1908.

It is now 50 years since Queen Victoria, my beloved mother, and my August Predecessor on the throne of these realms, for divers weighty reasons, with the advice and consent of Parliament, took upon herself the government of the territories theretofore administered by the East India Company. I deem this a fitting anniversary on which to greet the Princes and Peoples of India, in commemoration of the exalted task then solemnly undertaken. Half a century is but a brief span in your long annals, yet this half century that ends to-day will stand amid the floods of your historic ages, a far-shining landmark. The proclamation of the direct supremacy of the Crown sealed the unity of Indian Government and opened a new era. The journey was arduous, and the advance may have sometimes seemed slow; but the incorporation of many strangely diversified communities, and of some three hundred millions of the human race, under British guidance and control has proceeded steadfastly and without pause. We survey our labours of the past half century with clear gaze and good conscience.

Difficulties such as attend all human rule in every age and place, have risen up from day to day. They have been faced by the servants of the British Crown with toil and courage and patience, with deep counsel and a resolution that has never faltered nor shaken. If errors have occurred, the agents of my government have spared no pains and no self-sacrifice to correct them; if abuses have been proved, vigorous hands have laboured to apply a remedy.

No secret of empire can avert the scourge of drought and plague, but experienced administrators have done all that skill and devotion are capable of doing to mitigate those dire calamities of Nature. For a longer period than was ever known in your land before, you have escaped the dire calamities of War within your borders. Internal peace has been unbroken.

In the great charter of 1858 Queen Victoria gave you noble assurance of her earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the government for the benefit of all resident therein. The schemes that have been diligently framed and executed for promoting your material convenience and advance—schemes unsurpassed in their magnitude and their boldness—bear witness before the world to the zeal with which that benignant promise has been fulfilled.

The rights and privileges of the Feudatory Princes and Ruling Chiefs have been respected, preserved, and guarded; and the loyalty of their allegiance has been unswerving. No man among my subjects has been favoured, molested, or disquieted, by reason of his religious belief or worship. All men have enjoyed protection of the law. The law itself has been administered without disrespect to creed or caste, or to usages and ideas rooted in your civilisation; it has been simplified in form, and its machinery adjusted to the requirements of ancient communities slowly entering a new world.

The charge confided to my Government concerns the destinies of countless multitudes of men now and for ages to come; and it is a paramount duty to repress with a stern arm guilty conspiracies that have no just cause and no serious aim. These conspiracies I know to be abhorrent to the loyal and faithful character of the vast hosts of my Indian subjects, and I will not suffer them to turn me aside from my task of building up the fabric of security and order.

Unwilling that this historic anniversary should pass without some signal mark of Royal clemency and grace, I have directed that, as was ordered on the memorable occasion of the Coronation Durbar in 1903, the sentences of persons whom our courts have duly punished for offences against the law, should be remitted, or in various degrees reduced; and it is my wish that such wrongdoers may remain mindful of this act of mercy, and may conduct themselves without offence henceforth.

Steps are being continuously taken towards obliterating distinctions of race as the test for access to posts of public authority and power. In this path I confidently expect and intend the progress henceforward to be steadfast and sure, as education spreads, experience ripens, and the lessons of responsibility are well learned by the keen intelligence and apt capabilities of India.

From the first, the principle of representative institutions began to be gradually introduced, and the time has come when, in the judgment of my Viceroy and Governor-General and others of my counsellors, that principle may be prudently extended. Important classes among you, representing ideas that have been fostered and encouraged by British rule, claim equality of citizenship, and a greater share in legislation and government. The politic satisfaction of such a claim will strengthen, not impair, existing authority and power. Administration will be all the more efficient, if the officers who conduct it have greater opportunities of regular contact with those whom it affects, and with those who influence and reflect common opinion about it. I will not speak of the measures that are now being diligently framed for these objects. They will speedily be made known to you, and will, I am very confident, mark a notable stage in the beneficent progress of your affairs.

I recognise the valour and fidelity of my Indian troops, and at the New Year I have ordered that opportunity should be taken to show in substantial form this, my high appreciation, of their martial instincts, their splendid discipline, and their faithful readiness of service.

The welfare of India was one of the objects dearest to the heart of Queen Victoria. By me, ever since my visit in 1875, the interests of India, its Princes and Peoples, have been watched with an affectionate solicitude that time cannot weaken. My dear Son, the Prince of Wales, and the Princess of Wales, returned from their sojourn among you with warm attachment to your land, and true and earnest interest in its well-being and content. These sincere feelings of active sympathy and hope for India on the part of my Royal House and Line, only represent, and they do most truly represent, the deep and united will and purpose of the people of this Kingdom.

May Divine protection and favour strengthen the wisdom and mutual good-will that are needed for the achievement of a task as glorious as was ever committed to rulers and subjects in any State or Empire of recorded time.

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