

## How India is Governed

**Nawab of Bahawalpur, Rajput princely state of India, considered very loyal to the British crown, comments in 1899 after his investiture as nawab following the death of his father**

It is scarcely possible," he said, "to imagine circumstances more different than those of the Indian chiefs now and what they were at the time Queen Victoria came to the throne. Now their sympathies have expanded with their knowledge and their sense of responsibility; with the degree of confidence reposed in them. They recognize their obligations to their own states and their duty to the imperial throne. The British crown is no longer an impersonal abstraction, but a concrete and inspiring force. The political system of India is neither feudalism nor federation. It is embodied in no constitution; it does not rest upon treaty, and it bears no resemblance to a league. It represents a series of relationships that have grown up between the crown and Indian princes under widely different historical conditions, but which in process of time have gradually conformed to a single type. The sovereignty of the crown is everywhere unchallenged. Conversely, the duties and the services of the state are implicitly recognized, and, as a rule, faithfully discharged. It is this happy blend of authority with free will, of sentiment with self-interest, of duties with rights, that distinguishes the Indian Empire under the British crown from any other dominion of which we read in history. The princes have gained prestige instead of losing it. Their rank is not diminished, and their privileges have become more secure. They have to do more for the protection they enjoy, but they also derive more from it; for they are no longer detached appendages of empire, but its participators and instruments. They have ceased to be architectural adornments of the imperial edifice, and have become the pillars that help to sustain the main roof."

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