

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Deposition of Provincial Governors

Proposal to depose the provincial governors

On assuming the caliphate, Ali decided to depose the provincial governors appointed by Othman, and appoint new Governors in their stead. Some of the Governors like Muawiyah in Syria had been in office for more or less twenty years and had grown too powerful. Such concentration of power in a single person was fraught with danger to the body politics, and Ali felt that in the interests of the State it was necessary that there should be a change in the provincial governors. As a matter of fact one of the main allegations against Othman which had triggered off the revolt was nepotism in the appointment of Governors. Ali felt that even if Othman had any justification for the appointment of his favorites as Governors, such justification was no longer there after his death. As such a change was necessary in general interest. Because of the unfortunate revolt against Othman, the administration stood shattered in some parts of the country. For the proper rehabilitation of administration a change in personnel was essential. Ali had noticed that for some time past the Muslims had departed from the austere way of the life of Islam, and had taken to the luxurious way of living borrowed from the non-Muslims. Ali had a program for the restoration of Islam to its pristine purity. For the implementation of such program likely to have political, religious and social repercussions it was necessary that Ali should have, as the provincial heads, persons in whom he had confidence and who could be depended upon to carry out his policies into action. Ali did not wish to give the impression that he intended to victimize any particular individual; his proposal accordingly envisaged the deposition of all the existing Governors and their replacement by new men of established integrity.

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