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What was the situation like in Scotland in the late 13th century? What kind of laws were in effect?

Although there were about fifteen claims to the Scottish throne, essentially two families were vying for power:

- Should the king be John Balliol?
- Should it be Robert the Bruce?

The clans were split between who should have their loyalty. The situation was ripe for a takeover by England.

In fact, it was Edward's strategy which helped to cause the chaos in the first place. When the Scottish lords could not decide who should be king, they asked for Edward's help with the decision. The matter was submitted to a "court" which picked John Balliol, the weaker, more controllable man.

King John was crowned on the Stone of Scone (also known as the "Stone of Destiny") in 1292. He paid homage to Edward I on Christmas Day, 1292.

Soon the Scottish people began to complain about Balliol. Longshanks, to whom Balliol had paid homage, ordered that all complaints be submitted to English courts. Balliol objected but was threatened with contempt of court and the loss of his castles and towns if he didn't agree.

The subtle English takeover had begun.

Now Balliol was in serious trouble. The Scottish people didn't want him. The English king, who had his own agenda, was not supporting him.

In fact, Edward - the man who became known as the "English Justinian" because of the effective legal system he'd instituted in England - already had a brilliant plan for his next conquest. His strategy led to a divided Scotland where both sides wanted his help. He became "Overlord of Scotland" without a fight.

Edward even took the sacred Stone of Scone (also referred to as the Stone of Destiny) on which Scottish monarchs had been crowned for centuries. He brought it to Westminster Abbey in London where he had a special throne made for it. Perhaps he thought that "owning" the Stone of Scone gave him the right to own the Scottish crown.

But Balliol was not as weak as Edward thought. When Longshanks wanted the Scots to help him fight the French, Balliol stood firm. Neither he nor his people would do anything to help Edward with his military campaigns in France.

The die was now cast. Edward would suffer no independent thinking from the "King" of Scotland.

Longshanks went to war with Balliol.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WHO-SHOULD-BE-KING-William-Wallace-Infamous-Trial>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WHO-SHOULD-BE-KING-William-Wallace-Infamous-Trial>

Media Stream



Coronation Chair - Made for the Stone of Scone

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