

## The Base of Partition Morley-Minto Reforms Act of 1909 in India

Prof. (Dr.) Shiw Balak Prasad<sup>1\*</sup>, Sushanta Pramanik<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University Dept. of Pol. Sc. B.N. Mandal University, Madhepura, Bihar, India

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar Univesity dept. of Pol. Sc. B.N. Mandal University, Madhepura, Bihar, India

\*Corresponding author: Prof. (Dr.) Shiw Balak Prasad | Received: 05.01.2019 | Accepted: 16.01.2019 | Published: 30.01.2019  
DOI: [10.36347/sjahss.2018.v07i01.009](https://doi.org/10.36347/sjahss.2018.v07i01.009)

### Abstract

### Review Article

After establishment of British Rule in India several measures were taken for reform in India, but main objectives of the then rulers were in the interest of the Britishers. So, study of the rise and growth of parliamentary institutions ever since the establishment of the British rule in India is beset with a strange spectacle of two divergent currents, each pushing things in its own direction, but both ultimately witnessing their confluence into a single channel as a result of which the present bicameral model of the Parliament came into being.

**Keywords:** Colonial, Constitution, Country, Dichotomy, Establishment, Statement.

**Copyright © 2019:** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution license which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use (NonCommercial, or CC-BY-NC) provided the original author and source are credited.

## INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the Morley-Minto Reforms in the form of the Indian Councils Act of 1909 has an importance of its own in this regard. While the Reforms certainly contributed to the growth of Indian legislature at the central and local levels, they showed the seeds of communalism by granting separate electorates to the Muslims. In this way, the policy of 'divide and rule' was reinforced by the policy of the 'counterpoint of the natives against the natives.' The official point of view remained embedded in this traditional assumption that English parliamentary institutions could not work in this country. A government of India dispatch of 1892 had already put it that Indian Society was essentially a Congressional of widely separated classes, races and communities with divergences of interests and hereditary sentiments [1]. Representing the same standpoint, Lord Orley said in the House of Lord "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or necessarily to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it [2]".

The Act of 1909 enlarged the size of the Supreme Legislative Council. Now it could have 37 official members (26 nominated by the Governor and nine ex-office members Governor-General Himself, one extra ordinary member and 7 ordinary members) and 32 non-official members (5 members to be nominated by the Governor-General and the rest to be elected for a term of 3 years by provincial Legislative Councils, Landholders, Muslims, Chambers of Commerce of Bombay and Calcutta etc.) For the first time the system

of separate electoral representation was accorded whereby seats were allotted to different communities, castes, classes and interests. The Governor-General -in-Council, with the approval of the Secretary of State of India, was empowered to make regulations as to the conditions under which and the manner in which persons resident in India might be nominated or elected as members of the supreme legislative council (or to any of the provincial legislative councils) along with the qualifications of the elected and nominated members.

The Act of 1909 also enhanced the power of the members to ask questions and their supplementary and discuss budget. They could move do solution desire alteration of taxation, rising of any additional grant to local government proposed or mentioned in the financial statement or explanatory memorandum. But they were not permitted to discuss expenditure on interest on debt, electrical affairs, railways etc. The member-incharge of a department could refuse to answer a supplementary question off-hand or demand some time for this purpose. The members got the power to raise a definite issue in the House by putting a resolution which the president could disallow, in full or part, without assigning any reason. No discussion was permitted on any subject falling outside the competence of the council, or on any matter affecting relations of the government of India with any foreign power or princely state, or any other matter under judicial examination or settlement.

The system of Morley- Minto Reforms was appreciated by the English writers as well as by the

leaders of the Muslim league and leading leaders of the 'Moderate school'. For instance, the authors of the councils, supreme as well as provincial, were given "a real opportunity of exercising some influence on questions of administration and finance [3]." The Muslim communalists expressed their profound satisfaction with the system of weightage given to their co-religionists. This, Main Muhammed Shafi, in a letter to Dunlop Smith dated April 30, 1909, said that the provisions of the Act "gave full expression to their grateful feelings and we thought that separate representation at a stages had become a settle fact [4]." Among leading liberals of that time, Surendranath Banerjee hailed these Reforms as "crowning triumph of constitutional agitation" and urged upon the Congressmen to express their deep gratitude to the Government of India for granting "most valued concessions. "Likewise, Gokhale admired them for affording the people of India" an occasion to have a responsible association with the Indian administration [5]."

But this system was vehemently attacked by the fiery nationalists of the country. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in his presidential address at the Lahore Congress of 1909 denounced these Reforms for crating communal dimensions and laying down unnecessarily narrower and arbitrary restrictions on the choice of the electors [6]" On this occasion M.A. Jinnah moved a resolution (that was seconded by Harula Haque and Hasan Imam) that desired immediate scrapping of the notorious system of communal representations to the Muslims [7]. There was no dearth of the critics who could discover herein a peculiar reconciliation of the principles of autocracy and constitutionalism. They could take it for granted that, though elected, the European elements were as good as the official, the Landlords and the Muslims "were admittedly there for their service to the Empire, and were bent upon improving the future of their own classes by proving their loyalty still further [8]."

Neither Lord Morley (the then Secretary of state for India), nor Lord Minto (the then Viceroy and Governor-General of India) should be credited with having an enlightened point of view in taking things in right direction. Prof. Coupland has endorsed the fact that Morley's ideas on Indian Government "had nothing to do with democracy [9]." But Minto was a man of different inclinations. In his despatch to Lord Morley dated November 27, 1909, he said: "I am afraid when the position is clearer, we may fairly owe so much in India.... I should say that if the Government of India was biased in any direction, it was towards Muhammedan interests [10]."

However, the most outstanding contribution found place in the historic declaration of Montagu who could extract such a monumental signal from the reluctant war Cabinet [11]. On August 20, 1917 he said:

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in full accord, is that of increasing association of the Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-Governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." This important declaration marked "the end of one epoch and the beginning of a new one [12]." The authors of the Montford Report themselves acknowledge the fact that the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 had made the Government of India "a benevolent despotism tempered by a remote and only occasionally vigilant democracy which might, as it saw fit, for proposes of enlightenment, consult the wishes of the subjects[13]."

## REFERENCES

1. Coupland, Reginald: The Indian Problem, Oxford University Press, London. 1943, P. 24.
2. Indian statutory commission Report. 1930, (I); Para 119.
3. Montford Report. Para 6
4. Das MN. Indian under Morley and Minto, George Allen and Unwin, 1964, P. 224.
5. Hoyland JS. Gokhale: His life and speeches, Sterlling Publishing House, Bombay, 1933, P. 130.
6. Banerjee AC. Indian Constitutional Documents, Calcutta: A. Mukherjee. 1945;(II), PP. 169-70.
7. Bahadur, Lal. Muslim League, Agra Book Store, Agra. 1956; P. 82
8. Pylee MV. A Constitutional History of India, S. Chand Publishing, Delhi. 1955; P. 148.
9. Coupland, Reginald: The Indian Problem, P. 34
10. Waley SD. Edwin Montagu, Asia Publishing House, Bombay. 1964, P. 136.
11. Das, Op. Cit. P. 248
12. Montford Report, Para 7
13. Ibid, para 81