

The Government of India Act 1858
(06 December, 2021)

Background

1. Revolt of 1857 had happened and Whig and Tories both came to a consensus of Crown control over EIC.
2. Lord Stanley, Prez of BoC introduced this Bill which became the Act of 1858.



**The Government of India Act
1858**

Features of The Government of India Act 1858

1. The GoI passed from EIC to Crown. The Armed forces of EIC was transferred to Crown.
2. **London - Calcutta relations:**
 1. The **BoC and CoD were abolished**. Thus it **ended** the structure formed by the **Pitt's India Act, 1784**.
 2. **Now the administration would be run by**
 1. **SoS** = He was to sit in the British Parliament. He was to be A

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Cabinet Minister responsible to British Parliament. He could send and receive secret msgs to GG w/o telling the India Council. Periodic reports to British P on the moral and material progress of India.

2. **The India Council = 15 mem** to advise SoS (he could overrule them). To be nominated by the Crown (7 of them from the erstwhile CoD). Approval of the Council was essential in financial matters.

3. **The GG was to be answerable only to SoS.**

3. Centre-State relations:

1. It laid down a **unitary as well as rigidly centralized administration.**
2. There were **presidencies ruled by Governors (and councils)** who were appointed by crown and
3. There were **provinces ruled by Lt. Governors (and councils)** appointed by GG,
4. the provinces and presidencies were mere agent of centre. They had to function under their express control and superintendence.
4. There was **no separation of powers. All power** - civil and military, executive and legislative **were with GGinC** who were **responsible only to SoS**. The **GGol** now came to be ka **Viceroy**.
5. (1853) Continuity was maintained in civil services and the same recruitment examination (of 1853) was carried on.

Significance of Government of India Act, 1858

1. This marked a beginning of the gradual relaxation of Imperial control and evolution of Responsible Govt.
2. The Transfer of Power in 1858 was just a formality **coz through BoC, Parliament already started controlling Indian Affairs.**
3. **The Government of India was finally directly controlled from London.**

Limitations

1. **SoS's complete control** over Indian admin was used to **exploit India more** than earlier.
2. Crown's assumption of Indian affairs led to **slackening of Parliament's interest in Indian affairs.**
3. The **entire machinery was bureaucratic (based on the Principle of Absolute control), totally unconcerned with public opinion.**

Queen's Proclamation, 1858

1. Queen of England to be **Kaiser i Hind.**
2. The **Policy of extension** of British territories was to be **abolished.**
3. Treaties of the EIC with the Native Princes were to be respected.
4. **Service in India thrown open to all wrt Merit.**

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5. A **Policy of religious neutrality and non-interference** was to be followed.
6. **Clemency** to Indian rebels if they laid down their arms.

Limitations

1. In practice, it was hollow and insincere.
2. Indian princes' status greatly suffered.
3. Indians strategically kept out of civil + military service (No Indian could reach above Brigadier till 1947).

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