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**Course Title : BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA, 1857 C.E. –  
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**Unit-II**

**Constitutional Developments after 1858: Indian Councils Act,  
1858 or Government of India Act, 1858 - Queen's Proclamation  
of 1858 - Indian Councils Act, 1861 - Indian Councils Act, 1892**

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# **Government of India Act, 1858**

- The Government of India Act 1858 was an Act of the British parliament that transferred the government and territories of the East India Company to the British Crown.
- The company's rule over British territories in India came to an end and it was passed directly to the British government.

# Features of Government of India Act, 1858

- East India Company was liquidated.
- Indian territories of Britain were to be governed in the name of the British Queen.
- The Court of Directors and the Board of Control were scrapped.
- The powers of the Company's Court of Directors were vested with the Secretary of State for India.

- This Secretary of State was to be a British MP and a member of the Prime Minister's cabinet. He was to be assisted by a council of 15 members.
- Lord Stanley became the First Secretary of State for India
- The representative of the British government in India was the Governor-General and Viceroy (both the same person to avoid conflict).

- The Viceroy and the governors of the various presidencies were appointed by the Crown.
- The Viceroy was to be assisted with an Executive Council.
- This act made India a direct British colony.
- This act abolished the dual government of the Pitt's India Act
- This act also ended the doctrine of lapse.

- The Indian Civil Services was to be instituted for the administration of the country. There was provision for Indians also to be admitted to the service.
- It was decided that the remaining Indian princes and chiefs would have their independent status provided they accept British suzerainty.

# **Queen Victoria's Proclamation (1858)**



- Queen Victoria's Proclamation (1858) was declared openly by Lord Canning on November 1, 1858 at Allahabad.
- It was in 1877 that Queen Victoria claimed the title of Qaisar-i-Hind in the Delhi Coronation Park.
- The declaration was the event of prominent talks which ensued in a massive assemblage popularly known as the Delhi Durbar.
- The transfer of powers was the result of the mutiny of 1857

# Importance of Queen's Proclamation

- The Queen's proclamation assured that no interference would be made by the administration in the matters of religious affairs.
- Even if the British Crown had a hold over the Indian administration, due respects were reimbursed to the customs, usages and ancient rites of the people of India.

- General amnesty was declared to all the rebellions except those who were involved in the murders of British subjects.
- The proclamation promised that no Indian territories annexed with British empire.

# **Indian Councils Act, 1861**

- The Indian Councils Act 1861 was an act of the British Parliament that made significant changes in the Governor-General's Council.
- For the executive functions of the Council, a fifth member was added. Now there were five members for home, military, law, revenue and finance. (A sixth member for public works was added in 1874.)

- Lord Canning, who was the Governor-General and Viceroy at the time, introduced the portfolio system. In this system, each member was assigned a portfolio of a particular department.
- For legislative purposes, the Governor-General's Council was enlarged. Now, there were to be between 6 and 12 additional members (nominated by the Governor-General).

- There were appointed for a period of 2 years. Out of these, at least half of the additional members were to be non-official (British or Indian).
- Their functions were confined to legislative measures.
- Lord Canning nominated three Indians to the Council in 1862 namely, the Raja of Benares, the Maharaja of Patiala and Sir Dinkar Rao.

- Any bill related to public revenue or debt, military, religion or foreign affairs could not be passed without the Governor-General's assent.
- The Viceroy had the power to overrule the council if necessary.
- The Governor-General also had the power to promulgate ordinances without the council's concurrence during emergencies.



- This Act restored the legislative powers of the Governor-in-Councils of the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay (which was taken away by the Charter Act of 1833).
- The legislative council of Calcutta had extensive power to pass laws for the whole of British India.

# **Indian Councils Act, 1892**

- The Indian Councils Act 1892 was an act of the British Parliament that increased the size of the legislative councils in India.
- The act increased the number of additional or non-official members in the legislative councils as follows:
  - Central Legislative Council: 10 – 16 members
  - Bengal: 20 members
  - Madras: 20 members
  - Bombay: 8 members
  - Oudh: 15 members
  - North Western Province: 15

- In 1892, out of 24 members, only 5 were Indians.
- The members were given the right to ask questions on the budget (which was barred in the Indian Councils Act 1861) or matters of public interest but had to give notice of 6 days for it.
- They could not ask supplementary questions.

- The principle of representation was initiated through this act.
- The district boards, universities, municipalities, chambers of commerce and zamindars were authorized to recommend members to the provincial councils.
- The legislative councils were empowered to make new laws and repeal old laws with the permission of the Governor-General.