

Colonial reforms: what changed and what did not

Track the 1919 Act, the 1935 Act and the 1946 Cabinet Mission across provinces, federation and courts

• Constitutional Developments (1919–1946)

◆ 1919: Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms

The 1919 Government of India Act implemented the Montagu–Chelmsford reforms.

Provincial dyarchy split subjects between ministers and the governor’s executive council.

A two-House central legislature was created, without central responsible government.

○ 1935: Government of India Act

Abolished provincial dyarchy and introduced provincial autonomy (ministries took office in 1937).

Provided for the establishment of the Federal Court of India, which began functioning in 1937.

Proposed an All-India Federation and central dyarchy, but the federation never came into operation.

◇ 1946: Cabinet Mission Plan

Arrived in India in March 1946 to negotiate the constitutional framework for transfer of power.

Comprised three British Cabinet ministers: Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander.

Lord Mountbatten was not a member of the Cabinet Mission; he arrived later as Viceroy in March 1947.

□ Institutional & Exam Distinctions

Dyarchy divides executive subjects; bicameralism divides a legislature into two Houses.

Distinguish the Council of State (1919 Act upper house) from the Federal Court (1935 Act judiciary).

Separate the year an Act was passed (1935) from the year its institutions started functioning (1937).

REMEMBER 1919: provincial dyarchy. 1935: provincial autonomy. 1946: Cabinet Mission.