

**Class: BA 6<sup>th</sup> Semester**

**Paper: HIS-HC-6016**

**History of India VIII (c.1857-1950)**

**Topic: Government of India Act**

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# **Government of India Act, 1858**

➤ **BACKGROUND**

➤ **PROVISIONS**

➤ **MAIN FACTS**

# **BACKGROUND OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT, 1858**

- The Revolt of 1857 served as a jolt to the British government.
- There was widespread resentment against the company in Britain as the policies of the company were blamed for the revolt.
- Queen Victoria, who was the monarch of Britain, also became the sovereign of British territories in India, with the title “Empress of India” as a result of this Act.

# Provisions of the 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.
- He was also the channel of communication between the British government in Britain and the Indian administration. He also had the power to send secret despatches to India without consulting his council.

➤ Via the Secretary of State, the British parliament could ask questions regarding Indian affairs.

➤ 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 (more than 560 in number) would have their independent status provided they accept British suzerainty.



# Facts – Government of India Act 1858

- First Secretary of State for India: Lord Stanley
- Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli was opposed to the crown directly ruling India, but his fellow MP's did not agree with his views and the bill passed the House of Commons easily.
- First Governor-General and Viceroy of India: Lord Canning

Dalhousie policy of frequent wars and annexation created discontentment among the army as well as the native rulers of India. The presidency governments were also not happy about centralization of legislative powers in the Governor General-in-Council. Transfer of Power It is significant to note that the process of transfer of power from the Company to the Crown had already begun even since the enactment of first Charter Act. • 1600-1772  
• 1773, 1784, 1793, 1813, 1833