



Smart Revision

Government of India Act 1935

Q: Why was there so much opposition to the Government of India Act of 1935? [7]

Ans: The Indian Act of 1935 was not liked nor was even appreciated by the Indian people. This was opposed for a number of reasons. One was that the G.G was head of federation and could exert special powers in the reserved subjects. All the ultimate control was in the hands of the viceroy and G.G. The act appeared to grant real power to the people of India, but in reality things were a little different. Provincial governor also had special powers in the two reserved areas. They had the authority to dismiss ministers and even the right to dismiss the whole administration and rule by proclamation during a period of emergency. However the governors were asked to act upon the advice of Ministers, which seemed to be very beneficial.

Another reason was that the part concerning the central Govt. was never introduced because the princes rejected the new arrangements. Although the act appeared to give the Indians a say in running their own country, there was a very limited franchise. The property qualification for voting meant that only 25% of Indians population was allowed to vote in the provincial elections. The act was opposed on all sides of India. The Congress, ML and even the princes of states disliked and resented this act. Nehru called it a “charter of slavery” and said that it had so many safeguards that it was like ‘a machine with strong breaks but no engine’. To Jinnah it was simply ‘thoroughly rotten, fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable. It could also be a reason that this Jinnah’s thinking was a cause of his opposition towards this act.

Q: How important was the Indian act of 1935 to the future of the subcontinent? [7]

Ans: This act of 1935 was extremely important for a no. of reasons. It governed India as this was the last major legislation that the British passed before Independence was granted. One of the reason was for which it was important was that some provincial autonomy was granted. This was the first time that this had been allowed and was seen as an important step forward. Ministers in the provinces could have control over all departments, except when governors choose to intervene in cases of public order or to veto a bill they disliked. This was a draw back since it meant that the real power was in the hand of the governors.

Another reason was that it granted more voting rights to the people of India i-e 25% of the population of India was now having the right to vote which was 5 times larger than that in 1909. The act also recommended a federal form of govt. for India which enables the princes to participate in the political affairs of India.

The final and the most important reason was that although it suited no-one, the act was an important point in the move towards independence. It proved the basis for the negotiations which finally resulted in the British leaving India. Parliamentary systems had been set up in which the Indians people were to gain increasing representation. Due to this elections of 1937 were organized in which the congress won and made the Muslims to face a hard time due to which the thought of independent nation was much more developed resulted in the independence moving nearer.

