

Movement for Independence

2

Simon Commission

- Government of India Act of 1919 had stated that a commission was to be set up after 10 years to enquire into the workings of the reforms set up in 1919
- British conservative Government feared that it might lose power to the Labour Party which might make too many concessions to Indians
- In 1927, it appointed a seven members committee

Opposition to Simon Commission

- Congress boycotted it for all of commissions members were British and for first time called for Independence
- All- party conference approved Nehru report

Main tenets of Nehru Report

- Immediate dominion status for India
- India was to be a federation with two chamber parliament
- Universal suffrage
- Separate electorates and reservation of seats for minorities
- No state religion
- Hindi as official language of India

Nehru Report rejected and Jinnah's fourteen points

- One-third of the elected representatives of both houses of central legislature should be Muslims
- Provincial autonomy
- Residuary powers for provinces
- Full provincial status for NWFP and Sindh

The Allahabad Address

- 1930, poet philosopher Allama Iqbal asked to chair a meeting of ML in Allahabad
- He called for Muslims of subcontinent to work toward achieving independent homeland
- Islam is creed and Muslims are nation
- He suggested amalgamation of Punjab, NWFP and Balochistan into a single state, along with the pending separation of Sindh from Bombay

Round Table Conferences

- British called a Round table conference to discuss Simon commission's recommendations

First RTC- November 1930

- Attended by ML, liberals, and representatives of Princely States
- Congress refused to attend unless it is guaranteed that all recommendations of conference will be implemented
- Princes declared that they would join a future federation of India as long as their rights were recognised
- The British agreed that representative government should be introduced at provincial level

Second RTC- September 1931

- Gandhi-Irwin Pact
- Many political prisoners were freed
- Gandhi agreed to give up his demand for full independence
- Conference failed because Labour Party lost power in Britain
- Also because of stubbornness of Gandhi
- However, NWFP and Sindh were declared as full provinces

Third RTC- November 1932

- Belligerent Lord Wellington
- Many Congress leaders were arrested
- Jinnah went into self exile
- Nothing significant was achieved

Government of India Act 1935

- Despite failure of Round Table Conferences, British Government announced its proposals for how India should be governed which was passed as Government of India Act, 1935

Main tenets of India Act of 1935

- India was to be a federation
- Bicameral legislature
- Diarchy was dropped at provincial level but was restored at central level
- Number of provinces increased to 11: NWFP, Orissa, Sindh
- GG was head of the federation and could exert special powers
- Provincial Governors also had emergency powers

Reaction to India Act, 1935

- Nehru called it a charter of slavery
- Princes rejected the part concerning central Government
- Jinnah rejected it too

1937 elections

- Held under tenets of 1937 elections
- Congress won absolute majority in four provinces, it was single largest party in four others
- Disappointing results for ML: lost in Muslim Majority provinces like Punjab and Bengal

Congress rule

- Congress treated ML with disdain
- In areas, where ML was single largest party Congress refused to cooperate
- Bande Matram
- Warda scheme
- Congress tyranny

- Day of Deliverance