

"The Simla Conference (1945) afforded the last opportunity of the forces of nationalism to fight a rearguard action to preserve the integrity of the country and when the battle was lost, the waves of communalism quickly engulfed it" Comment

Simla Conference was called by the then Viceroy Lord Wavell, when he realised the difficulty of neo-colonialism in India. The Second World War caused serious economic havoc in the country subcontinent where lakhs died due to famines of 1943.

Thus to avoid a second quit India Movement, Wavell planned a negotiation with leaders of the Congress Working Committee and thus the arrested leaders were released. The nationalists viewed this as a good opportunity to frame a unified nation.

Wavell opened up his plan of new Executive Council, where

- except Command-in-chief and Viceroy, all members would be Indians
- there will be equal representation of 'Caste Hindus' and Muslims.
- there will be representation from minorities like Sikhs, low castes etc

The tag 'Caste Hindus' was a blow to the secularist sentiments of nationalists.

Also Congress wanted to ~~select~~^{appoint} the representatives from each community including Muslims.

But the Muslim League claimed the choosing of Muslim representatives as part of their jurisdiction, and also demanded communal veto of $\frac{2}{3}$ rd majority in matters relating to Muslim interests.

Thus the plan itself was based on religious parity and communalism. Instead of bypassing the demands of Muslim League, Wavell abandoned his plan, which further deteriorated the situation; because

- ~~the~~ the demands of ML remained intact;
- the stature of ML among Muslims heightened.
- the judgements ^{satisfaction} of ML became a prerequisite for any further settlement.

The results are evident in 1946 elections, where Muslim League got majority in Muslim provinces.

Thus Simla Conference and Wavell plan failed in letter and spirit, but gave more power on ML to demand a separate nation.

The Reforms of 1909 introduced a cardinal problem and ground of controversy at every revision of the Indian electoral system. Comment

The Reforms of 1909 (or) the Minto-Morley Reforms was basically an amending act of the existing Indian Councils Act of 1892. But it also included the 'cardinal problems' of separate electorate for Muslims.

The sudden approval of Muslim demands in Shimla deputation of 1906 - representation on the basis of number and political interest - was not for balancing the conditions in India; but to counter the rising educated class and also as a supporting pillar in addition to the Moderate leaders.

The Act of 1909 was much of discrimination. The non-official ^{Muslim} members were out of proportion i.e. 11 out of 30 non-official seats were occupied by Muslims. Also the non-Muslim members were elected via indirect election and Muslim members through direct election.

Thus religion was introduced as a political factor. In the next Reform Act of 1919 (or) Montague-Chelmsford Act also, they pointed 'separate electorate' as the hindrance to self-government. They, instead of removing the system of separate electorate, extended it to for Sikhs, Indian Christians, Duglo-Indians and Europeans.

The future negotiations failed on minorities demands to secure separate electorate. Nehru Report, was not approved by Muslim League due to this. The 2nd Round Table Conference is also turned a battle ground on demand by different sections for separate electorate. Hence, B.R. Ambedkar demanded the same for untouchables.

Hence, 1909 Act was a landmark reforms, which introduced communalism in politics and later divided India on communal lines, where the working space of congress in creating a unified India was substantially reduced.