

# Lord Mayo

Richard Southwell Bourke 6th Earl of Mayo was a statesman from Ireland who held the position of Viceroy of India in from 1869 until his assassination in 1872. He was called Lord Mayo by the local Indians.

This article will give further details about Lord Mayo within the context of the Civil Services Examination.

## Background of Lord Mayo

Richard Bourke was born on 21 February 1822 to Robert Bourke, 5 Earl of Mayo and his wife, Anne Charlotte. He completed his education at the Trinity College in Dublin. After he completed his education he extensively travelled around Russia. The knowledge he would gain from his travels would be of immense use in the latter part of his career.

He later entered parliament in 1847 and represented various constituencies such as Kildare, Coleraine and Cockermouth from 1847 until 1868. The 6th Earl of Mayo was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1852, 1858 and finally in 1866. It would be in 1869 when he would be appointed as the fourth Viceroy of India where he would be referred to locally as Lord Mayo.

## Viceroy of India

As Viceroy of India Lord Mayo was responsible for the following actions:

- Lord Mayo stabilised the northwestern frontier of India by cultivating closer relationships with Sher Ali, the emir of Afghanistan. He did this with the hope of negating Russian influence in the region and ensure a buffer state would exist between the Russian and British Empire.
- He ordered the first census of India in 1871 which produced a general picture of various peoples of the subcontinent and their population size.
- Setting up of Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce
- Introduction of the most improved rifle, the Snider, and of rifled guns for the artillery.
- Improvement in the sanitary conditions for the troops.
- infrastructure development in the country by which an immense extension of roads, railroads, and canals was carried out.

Lord Mayo took interest in the Prison reforms, especially the convict settlements at the Andaman Islands. The most important legal reform during his time was the passage of the Indian Evidence Act in 1872. The act removed this anomaly and differentiation and introduced a

standard set of law applicable to all Indians. Earlier the law system was differentiated and was applied as per the caste, community and social group in question.

Lord Mayo was assassinated by a Pathan convict, Sher Ali Afridi, on 8 February 1872 while visiting the Andaman and Nicobar islands for a routine inspection. His body was brought home to Ireland and buried at the medieval ruined church in Johnstown, County Kildare, near his home at Palmerstown House. One effect of his assassination was there were greater calls for the creation of an intelligence bureau in India which would help in better tracking down fugitives or anyone else considered as subversive elements by the British colonial administration.

### Legacy of Lord Mayo

Mayo College was established at Ajmer in 1875 for the education of young Rajput princes. Colonel Sir Oliver St John became its first Principal. The newly discovered swallowtail butterfly *Papilio mayo* from the Andaman Islands was named in his honour.

In India, he is primarily remembered for the infrastructure works and the educational institutions set up in his name.