

Lord Ripon

George Frederick Samuel Robinson, 1st Marquess of Ripon was a British politician who served in every Liberal cabinet from 1861. He is commonly referred to as Lord Ripon.

Lord Ripon initiated many reforms to ease the plight of the local Indians during his tenure as the Viceroy. For this, he is known as the 'Good Viceroy of India'

Further details about Lord Ripon will be given in this article within the context of the IAS Exam

Background of Lord Ripon

Born on 24 October 1827, Lord Ripon's was the second son of Prime Minister F.J. Robinson and Lady Sarah Hobart. His education was done privately attending neither school nor college. He was awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University.

Lord Ripon entered the House of Commons in 1852 as a member of the Liberal party.

In 1863 he was made a Privy Counsellor and Secretary of State for War under Palmerston, with a seat in the cabinet. He retained this office when Lord Russell became prime minister on Palmerston's death in 1865 and then served under Russell as Secretary of State for India between February and June 1866.

In William Gladstone's first administration he was Lord President of the Council (1868–1873). During this period he acted as chairman of the joint commission for drawing up the Treaty of Washington with the United States over the Alabama Claims. For this, in 1871 he has created Marquess of Ripon, in the County of York.

Viceroy of India

William Gladstone appointed Lord Ripon as the Viceroy of India in 1880. One of his first act was the introduction of the Ilbert Bill which would have granted Indians more legal right including the right of Indian judges to judge Europeans in court. Although it was a progressive move, the bill was vehemently opposed by Europeans who were aghast at the idea of being judged by native Indians.

One of his other efforts included a move to introduce a Bengal land tenancy bill - which would become the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 - to improve the condition of the peasants. Lord Ripon also repealed the unpopular Vernacular Press Act of 1878.

Above all Lord Ripon is known for the Resolution of 1882, which would give Indians the right to local self-government. The scheme of local self-governments would develop the Municipal institutions which had been under the direct control of the British Crown. The series of

enactments would set up local self-governing bodies in the rural and urban areas. For this, he is known as the 'Father of Local-Self Government in India.

Other reforms of Lord Ripon include the Hunter Commission, under William Williamson Hunter which called for large scale educational reforms both at the primary and educational reforms and the First Factory Act of 1881 which reduced the working hours of local factory workers and sought to improve their condition

Lord Ripon also played a crucial role in reorganizing the Madras Forest Department and in expanding systematic forest conservancy in India.

Later Life of Lord Ripon

Lord Ripon's tenure as Viceroy ended in 1884 upon which he returned to England. He held many responsible positions in such as that of honorary Colonel of the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Prince of Wales' Own from 1873 to 1906 was Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding of Yorkshire.

For a time he was also a Freemason, who served as Provincial Grand Master of the West Riding and Deputy Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England from 1861 to 1869 and ultimately as Grand Master from 1870. He was also Chancellor of the University of Leeds from 1904 until his death in 1909.

He was buried at St Mary's, Studley Royal and was succeeded by his only son, Frederick

In Calcutta, Ripon Street was named after him. The Ripon Club in Mumbai founded in 1884 by the Parsis for their community members, was named after him.