

## Lord Canning

### Background of Lord Canning

Born on 14 December 1812 at Brompton near London, Canning was the youngest child of George Canning and Joan, Viscountess Canning, daughter of Major-General John Scott. He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, where he graduated B.A. in 1833, as first-class in classics and second class in mathematics.

He entered Parliament in 1836, siding with the Conservatives faction in the House of the Commons. In 1837 he entered the House of Lords. He held many administrative posts such as Under-Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs, and First Commissioner of Woods and Forests.

Lord Canning was serving as the Postmaster-General when in July 1855, Lord Dalhousie's (born on [April 22, 1812](#)) departure had opened up the vacancy of governor-generalship of India

The new governor sailed from England in December 1855 and entered upon the duties of his office in India at the close of February 1856.

Candidates planning to appear for the Civil Services Exam can visit the link [IAS Exam](#) for complete information on the Examination.

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- [UPSC Previous Year Question Papers](#)
- [List of Government Schemes in India](#)
- [Daily Current Affairs for UPSC](#)
- [Comprehensive News Analysis](#)
- [PIB Summary and Analysis](#)
- [UPSC Notes PDF](#)
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- [100 Difference between Articles](#)
- [Topic-Wise GS 3 Questions for UPSC Mains](#)
- [UPSC MCQs On Government Schemes](#)

### Viceroy of India

Taking charge of his administrative duties in India, one of his first acts was to pass the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856 (passed on [July 16, 1856](#)) which was drafted by his predecessor Lord Dalhousie and the General Service Enlistment Act Of 1856. But before these acts could come into a proper force, a monumental event in Indian history took place.

That event was the [Revolt of 1857](#), which happened as a result of the long-simmering tensions regarding British presence and policies in India. Despite believing himself insufficient for the task ahead, Canning rose to the occasion in weathering the storm and preserving the colonial holding of British India through calm judgement and a swift hand. When the rebellion was suppressed he adopted a policy of clemency which did not punish the sepoys who had disbanded when ordered to and dispersed to their villages during the rebellion. His opponents called him 'Clemency Canning' unflatteringly because British popular opinion at the time called for collective and indiscriminate reprisals on the local population.

Find the list of [British Legislations passed in India](#) by visiting the linked article

While a rebellion was raging in Oudh he issued a proclamation declaring the lands of the province forfeited, and this step gave rise to much angry controversy. A secret despatch, couched in arrogant and offensive terms, was addressed to Canning by Lord Ellenborough, then a member of the Derby administration, which would have justified the Governor-General in immediately resigning. But from a strong sense of duty, he continued at his post. Lord Canning replied to the despatch, calmly and in a statesman-like manner explaining and vindicating his censured policy, and in 1858 he was rewarded by being made the first Viceroy of India.

Before the rebellion, Canning wished to produce a photographic survey of the Indian people, primarily for their own private collection. But the project transformed into an official government study as a consequence of the rebellion after which it was seen as useful documentation in the effort to learn more about native communities and thereby better understand them. The result was an eight-volume work published under titled The People of India, between 1868 and 1875.

Aspirants can check the following links to assist themselves and do comprehensive preparation for the Civil services Exam-

1. [Difference between Viceroy and Governor-General](#)
2. [List of Viceroys in India\(1858 to 1947\)](#)
3. [List of Governor-General of Bengal and India](#)
4. [The Partition Of Bengal: Background, Reactions](#)
5. [NCERT Notes: The Indian Councils Act 1861](#)

## Later Life of Lord Canning

In April 1859 he received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament for his great services during the rebellion. He was also made an extra civil grand cross of the Order of the Bath, and in May of the same year, he was raised to the dignity of an Earl, as Earl Canning. By the strain of anxiety and hard work his health and strength were seriously impaired, while the death of his wife was also a great shock to him; in the hope that rest in his native land might restore him, he left India, reaching England in April 1862. But it was too late. He died in London on 17 June. About a month before his death he was created a Knight of the Garter.