

**BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION IN
BURMA (MYANMAR) (1897-1923)**

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ABSTRACT

With the Advent of the three successive Anglo-Myanmar Wars of 1824, 1852 and 1885, Myanmar was completely annexed by the British and was made an appendage to India for the convenience of Colonial Administration. Since then Myanmar became one of many provinces of India, and the system of British Colonial administration which was mainly based upon Indian model began to take shape. Myanmar was first governed from Calcutta and then from Delhi, and the Chief Commissioner administration was introduced, under whose charge commissioner's Divisions were consolidated. The first chief commissioner was Sir Charles Bernard, who was the Central bureaucracy and his staffs, the Secretariat in Yangon as well. The British administrative officers formed as Cadre known as "Burma Commission", mainly recruited from the Indian Civil Service. The purpose of colonial administration was maintenances of Law and Order and collection of revenue for the smoothly running of capitalist economy and the Bureaucratic mechanism. In 1897 the Upper and Lower Myanmar well constituted as a single province governed by a Lieutenant Governor with a provincial government and a Legislative Council of 9 nominated members. By the Morley Minto reforms of 1909, the Legislative Council was enlarged with 17 members and then in 1920, it was increased to 30. But the Council was a mere rubber-stamp and acted as an advisory body to the governor who exercised veto power. There was no vigorous demand for representative government system by the Myanmar people until 1917, when the Reforms measures

for India was announced by Montagu in December 1917, pledging to Dyarchy to be granted after the First World War, Myanmar's dream of "Self-government" had started to delight the sleeping minds of nationalists and thus demanded the Reform measures by sending YMBA delegations to India and London. The result of these efforts was the Montagu-Chalmsford Reforms known popularly as the Dyarchy Scheme of 1921, but formally inaugurated two years later in 1923. It was really a joint-administration the division of executive government into two parts, viz: the Reserved subjects and the transferred subject. Myanmar became a Governor's province with an executive council (of four members) and a Legislative Council (of 103 seats). Governor has power to overrule the decisions of both Councils of ministers and Legislative Council. Myanmar was divided into two sections, viz: the area of Myanmar proper and the Hill areas. The Myanmar proper was administered directly by the Governor, and the Hill areas, called reserved subjects retained with its traditional Chiefs under the British supervision. The Dyarchy Scheme obviously revealed the British Colonial policy of "divide and rule" and was not popular with the nationalist demands of "Home rule", but it lasted for 14 years until 1937 at the time when Myanmar was completely separated from India.

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