

In 1906, Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs, announced in the British parliament that his government wanted to introduce new reforms for India, in which the locals were to be given more powers in legislative affairs. With this, a series of correspondences started between him and Lord Minto, the then Governor General of India. A committee was appointed by the Government of India to propose a scheme of reforms. The committee submitted its report, and after the approval of Lord Minto and Lord Morley, the Act of 1909 was passed by the British parliament. The Act of 1909 is commonly known as the Minto-Morley Reforms.

The following were the main features of the Act of 1909:

- The number of the members of the Legislative Council at the Center was increased from 16 to 60.
- The number of the members of the Provincial Legislatures was also increased. It was fixed as 50 in the provinces of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, and for the rest of the provinces it was 30.
- The members of the Legislative Councils, both at the Center and in the provinces, were to be of four categories i.e. ex-officio members (Governor General and the members of their Executive Councils), nominated official members (those nominated by the Governor General and were government officials), nominated non-official members (nominated by the Governor General but were not government officials) and elected members (elected by different categories of Indian people).
- Right of separate electorate was given to the Muslims.
- At the Center, official members were to form the majority but in provinces non-official members would be in majority.
- The members of the Legislative Councils were permitted to discuss the budgets, suggest the amendments and even to vote on them; excluding those items that were included as non-vote items. They were also entitled to ask supplementary questions during the legislative proceedings.
- The Secretary of State for India was empowered to increase the number of the Executive Councils of Madras and Bombay from two to four.
- Two Indians were nominated to the Council of the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs.
- The Governor General was empowered to nominate one Indian member to his Executive Council.