

Introduction

The elections of 1945–46 were the last held under British rule. They were very important because they showed which political party had real support among different communities and shaped the future of India's freedom and partition.

Background

The British organized these elections to test the strength of Congress and the Muslim League after the failure of the Simla Conference. Congress continued to demand a united India, while the League, under Jinnah, demanded Pakistan. The elections were seen as a final test of both parties' popularity.

Results

Congress won the majority of seats in Hindu-majority areas, but the Muslim League won almost all Muslim seats—425 out of 496. This made the League the only real representative of Muslims. Congress still remained powerful in general seats, but the League showed dominance among Muslims.

Significance for Muslim League

The results gave Jinnah and the League huge strength. It proved that Muslims trusted the League to defend their rights. The British had to accept the League as the true voice of Muslims. This made the demand for Pakistan stronger and more realistic.

Significance for Congress

Congress stayed powerful but could no longer claim to represent all Indians. It remained the voice of Hindus and non-Muslims, but the Muslim League's rise forced Congress to deal with it as an equal rival. This weakened Congress's position.

Overall Significance

The elections of 1945–46 showed that Hindus and Muslims were deeply divided politically. The League's strong victory made Pakistan's creation almost certain. These elections directly led to the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 and eventually the partition of India in 1947.