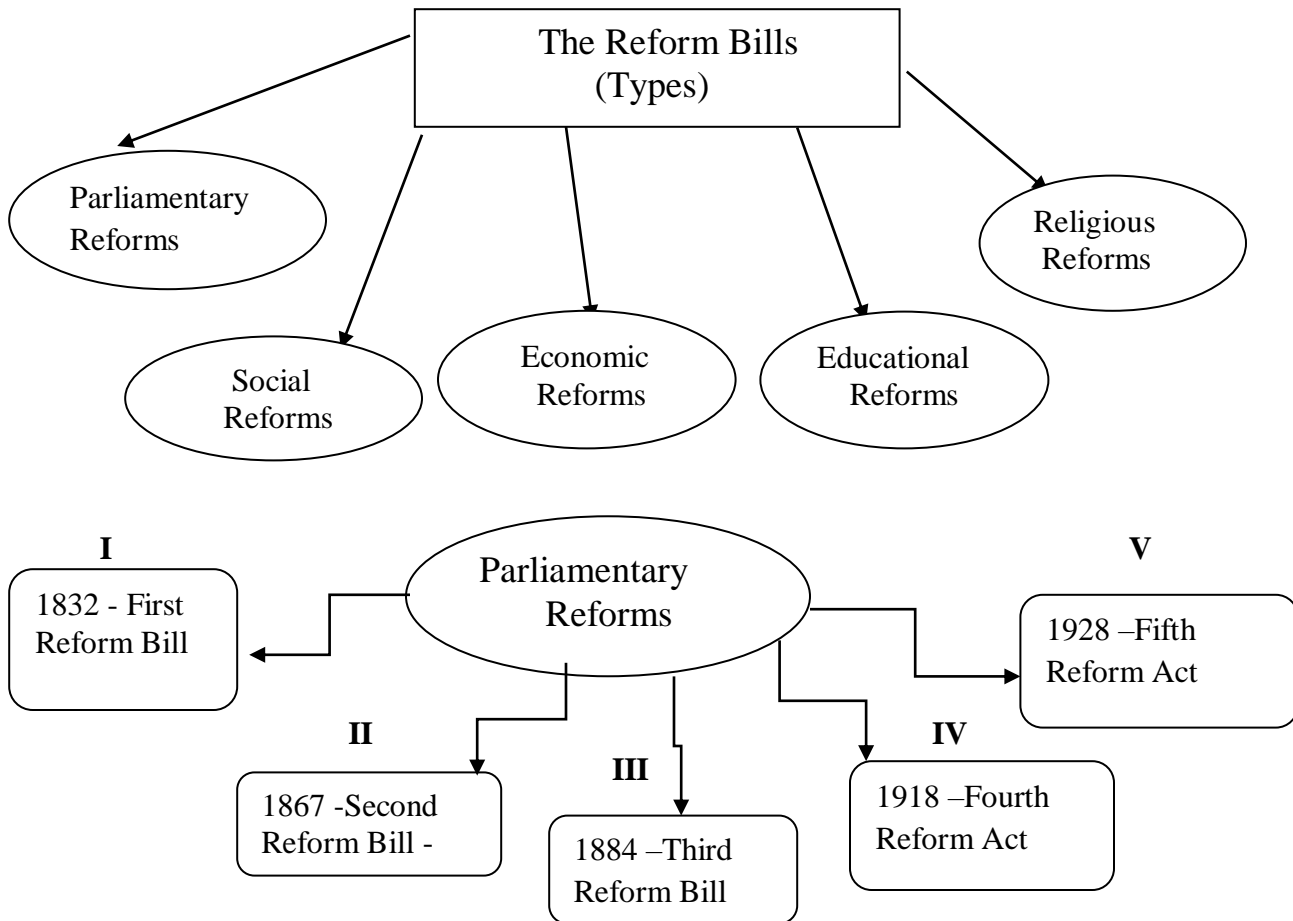


The Reform Bills (1832 – 1928)

Introduction : In consequence to Agrarian and Industrial Revolution in England, the people of that time faced a lot of problems. Those problems had to be solved by the ruling government by way of passing many Reform Bills. The Reform Bills were a series of proposals to reform voting in the British parliament.

Types of Reforms Bills: These Reforms Bills were of five types. They are:



Parliamentary Reform Acts: (Voting Rights)

The Parliamentary Reform Bills were a series of proposals to reform voting in the British parliament. These include the Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884. The bills reformed voting by increasing the electorate for the House of Commons (people representatives). In 1832, Parliament passed a law changing the British electoral system. It was known as the Great Reform Act. Many common people living in the towns, mostly from the Whig party (people's supporters) were given the right to vote.

In the second Reform Bill of 1867, all male householders paying an annual rent of 10 pounds as annual rent in the towns were given the right to vote. Benjamin Disraeli introduced and passed this Act in the Parliament.

The third Reform Act of 1884 gave the voting right to the householders of the country too.

The fourth Reform Act of 1918 gave the voting right to all 21 year men and women aged 25 and above,

The fifth Reform Act of 1928 abolished the age difference between men and women voters. All 21 year old people could vote.

Social Reform Acts: Factory Acts:

- ❖ Factory Act of 1802 – fixed the working hours of the labourers as 12
- ❖ Factory Act of 1809 – banned the employment of children below 9 years
- ❖ The Mines Act 1842 – prohibiting the work of women and children in mines.
- ❖ The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 – providing relief fund to poor employees.
- ❖ Anti-slavery Act 1807 – abolition of slavery (William Wilberforce is the man who fought for it).
Lord Althorp criticized the ill-treatment of the child labour. Robert Owen may be called the father of Socialism.

Economic Reforms :

Robert Peel believed in the philosophy *Laissez Faire* (Free Trade) coined by Adam Smith. So, Robert Peel wanted to help the manufacturers and business people. He passed the Bank Charter Act of 1844. Under his guidance, the bank of England issued currency notes on the basis of Government stock.

Educational Reforms:

- ❖ The Act of 1833 – financial assistance to promote education
- ❖ The Elementary Education Act of 1870 – attendance was made compulsory. Government aid was given to schools
- ❖ The Test Act of 1871 – Many new universities were started in Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle. Women were also allowed to study in the universities.

These kind of Reform bills brought in many changes to the Victorian England.