

THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF YOUTH

A BILL ON

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

SUBMITTED BY

THE FEDERATION OF INDIAN STUDENT SOCIETIES IN GREAT
BRITAIN

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The purpose of this memorandum is to amplify some of the statements contained in the preamble to the bill (the text of which will be found on pages 7-8). No attempt has been made to give a full report of the political and economic conditions of India today, but it is hoped that this memorandum—which has been drawn up in an entirely objective spirit and contains only acknowledged facts—will throw light on the issues involved and enable this Parliament to deal in an informed and realistic manner with a problem of the utmost importance not only to India but to the world at large.

I. MATERIAL CONDITIONS.

(1) *Annual Income.*

The total population of India is roughly 353 millions. Only .07 per cent of the total population have incomes exceeding £75 per annum. The average annual income per capita is estimated at £3 compared with about £82 in the United Kingdom and £153 in the United States.

(2) *Rural Disintegration.*

Of the total population, 70.6 per cent. are employed in agriculture. The distribution of the agricultural population is as follows :

	1921	1931
Landlords	3,727,000	3,527,000
Cultivators	74,665,000	61,180,000
Agricultural Labourers ..	21,676,000	31,480,000
Others	4,608,000	6,536,000

In some parts of India, the peasant pays a land tax which amounts to about 10 per cent. of the value of his harvest returns. In other parts, where the iniquitous system of land tenure called *Zamindari* introduced by the East India Co. prevails, the peasant has to part with as much as 40 per cent. and more of the harvest returns. The *zamindar* (landlord) who extorts this tribute seldom contributes to the welfare of the peasant or the efficiency of agriculture.

Even in areas where the *Zamindari* system is absent, the peasants are in the main tenants holding their land at the mercy of the State, the landlord or the moneylender.

The tax-burden, the need for cash at the beginning of every sowing season, and the absence of facilities for co-operative rural credit and other factors