

B2 (B++)
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Discuss the Effect of Climate on the
Mode of Living in Your Part of the
Empire.

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The pleasantly temperate character of New Zealand's climate is perhaps the most precious natural advantage of these islands. A climate which is never too hot or too cold for active out-of-door work, an air refreshed always by the vivifying breath of ocean is a condition scarcely second in importance even to the country's fertility of soil.

The climatic conditions vary very considerably in a land stretching over fourteen degrees of latitude, and the winters are naturally more severe on the plains of Southland and on the hinterland of Canterbury and Otago than in the North Auckland and East Coast regions, where snow and ice are never seen; but the tropic conditions of a large part of Australia and the snowbound winter months of Canada are alike unknown. The range of temperature is considerable if one takes the two extremes of the Dominion, but the figures for Wellington city, midway in New Zealand's length, will convey a fair idea of the average conditions. Wellington's mean summer temperature is 61.8° Fahrenheit, and ~~in~~ winter 48.6° , mean annual temperature 55.3° . The average annual rainfall in Wellington calculated over a number of years is 48.65 inches, and the average annual sunshine is two thousand and twenty-seven hours. The East Coast of the North Island from the Bay of Islands to the East Cape district has probably the most agreeable climate of all, and

the average conditions there may be truly described as delightful; in these favoured parts there is a complete absence of winter rigours as of summer scorching heat. The West Coast of the South Island has a heavy rainfall ranging from about seventy inches in the year on the northern part of the coast to about two hundred inches in the high country. Stewart Island which is the most southern part of New Zealand, ought to have the coldest climate but the conditions there are very similar to those in the North Auckland district.

Of all the climatic elements probably the one which exerts the greatest influence on our lives is rainfall. It causes us much personal discomfort, but the production of the food by which we live depends directly on the availability of moisture from this source. Our rainfall is moderate and the soil is fertile so our industrial development has been almost entirely on the agricultural and pastoral side.

Grain crops such as wheat, barley, oats, and maize grow best where the rainfall is moderate. The province of Canterbury because of its moderate rainfall and hot, dry summer has become the chief wheat growing province in New Zealand. Barley must also be grown in a fairly warm and dry climate. Hence it is grown chiefly in Canterbury, Otago, Marlborough, and Hawke's Bay. Oats can grow in a moister climate than wheat so some of it is grown in every province. Maize, however, requires not only a moister climate than other crops

but a warmer one, so it can only be grown on the farms in the northern part of the North Island.

Most fruits also must be grown in a warm and fairly dry climate. They require a rich, well drained soil, a warm, sunny position, and shelter from violent storms. These conditions are found round the northern shores of Nelson province, which has therefore become the principal fruit-growing region of New Zealand. Auckland has an almost tropical climate and can grow oranges, lemons, and grapes. Central Otago, however, ^{which} is high above the sea and enclosed by mountain ^{ranges}, is the only part of New Zealand which has a continental climate, and grows excellent apples and stone fruits.

Sheep, which have for years been New Zealand's greatest source of wealth are raised in the Eastern provinces of the country. The sheep farmers on the plains rear their stock for exporting as mutton, while the run owners in the hill country breed their sheep for the value of their fleeces.

The dairy produce of New Zealand is very rapidly becoming one of ~~of~~ our largest exports and is rivaling frozen mutton and wool as the most valuable product of the country. The cow is to the wetter Western provinces as the sheep is to the Eastern provinces. Dairy farming is carried on in every part of the Western provinces excepting where the forests interfere.

Climate conditions were the cause

of our forests growing. So climate has had its effect on the timber milling industry in which many New Zealanders are employed.

More than three-fourths of the Dominion's annual revenue comes from the products of the farms, sheep-runs, and orchards. Therefore three-fourths of the population of this country either directly or indirectly ~~are~~ ^{are} dependent upon the agricultural and pastoral industries for their livelihood. If, as often happens, a district experiences unusual weather conditions, the products of that place are affected ^{and} the majority of the population there have to suffer many hardships until they recover from their loss. Fortunately in New Zealand the climate is so varied and there are so many different products that it is impossible to cripple the finances of the ^{whole} country by adverse weather conditions.

The result of having a climate which in the winter is not quite cold enough to stop out-of-door work has an effect on the appetites of the New Zealanders. We live in a land flowing with milk and honey and we take advantage of our good fortune. Most visitors to this country remark on the large amount of food which we eat. Unfortunately the quantity and what we eat are supposed to have a bad effect on our health. However, although our climate may cause us to overeat we are well repaid in that it cures many ~~other~~ diseases and is a large factor in the physical development of the

people.

Our climate has a large influence on our speech. On the average New Zealanders do not speak good English. Many dialects not very different from Standard English have sprung up, but the most noticeable is that of the provinces where rain and cold weather are prevalent. Nobody likes to open his mouth and expose it to a cold damp air. The result is that when they do speak they do so through a half closed mouth and also through the nose. The sounds they make when speaking are not pleasant to hear and a stranger would have difficulty in understanding them.

Having such a wide difference in climate between North and South we do not all build our houses of wood or stone. Most houses in the North Island ~~are~~ made of some light material usually wood, because there ^{the} climate is mild. In the extreme south where the weather is cold and wet the majority of the buildings are made of stone or brick. In a few places where the winds are very strong and sometimes reach hurricane force the houses have stays holding them to the ground, to prevent them being blown away.

The effect of our climate on sport differs very little from that in England, for our conditions are almost the same. Our national game in the winter is Rugby football, which we play in preference to soccer because the weather is not so wet as in England and so a ball can be handled more

easily. In the summer cricket is the most popular pastime but many people are interested in tennis or swimming or athletics.

In the summer in New Zealand a very heavy dew falls in the morning, which makes it impossible to play games very early in the day. It was decided to put the clocks forward half an hour during the summer and by so lengthening the evenings provide time for recreation.

Our clothes in New Zealand are made of wool which protects us from the cold weather of our winter. In the summer we wear cotton or silk clothing which in mid-summer is worn only as protection from the sun.

We have been living in this country a very short time. Many of our parents came from Great Britain and there are very few people whose grandfathers were born in this country.

Climate has directed our way of living absolutely, as it must when we depend upon the products of the earth for our livelihood. Yet there are many little habits which are dictated by fashion and sentiment but which should be ruled by climate. One of the most noticeable of these is the growing tendency to build flat roofed houses in a country which is not like Arabia, but has a considerable rainfall. A custom which must go by the board is that of having a plum pudding on Christmas Day. The idea of eating a plum pudding on a day when the temperature is usually seventy degrees in the shade

seems absurd but it is true. However, in many households fruit and ice sweets are offered as well as the traditional plum pudding, and there is no doubt that in time climate will triumph over tradition.

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