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A comparison of the principle
motives for migration from the
United Kingdom to the Common-
wealth countries in 1958, with
those of 1858 and 1658.

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Introduction.

Sir Richard Grenville wrote,
"To pass the seas some think a toil,
Some think it strange abroad to roam,
Some think it grief to leave their soil,
Their parents, kinsfolk and their home,
Think so who list, I like it not,
I must abroad to try my lot",
and thus caught the spirit of the Elizabethan era. But if fortune seeking and adventure were the operative words of that age, impatience and determination were those of the seventeenth century. The Puritans and other settlers in Eastern America began what a story which is not yet finished - the fascinating one of men who leave their homeland and do so for widely different reasons.

The subject has been related to the economic climate of each period, and the bearing which this has had upon emigration. Where economic reasons have not obtained, reference has been made to current ideas and this has often provided an explanation of motives.

Whilst on one hand, conditions at the source of the migration are important no less so are the conditions in the territories which have received the immigrants. Throughout, we see that commercial interests, religion, politics and exploration are inseparably linked as explanatory factors for emigration.

In 1858 in particular, special attention has been paid to the directions of the migrations from the United Kingdom. Where mention of parts of the Empire such as India and certain regions of Africa has been omitted this is due to the necessity to limit in some way the terms of emigration. Here, the emigrant has been taken as one who by leaving Britain has associated himself permanently with the prospects of his new country and this does not include those who went only in order to make a fortune which they hoped to enjoy later in the mother country.

Reference has been made to the following works.

- 'Shall I Emigrate?' - Lewis and Frazer.
- 'People for the Commonwealth' - Barker.
- 'Complete Guide to Emigration' - Pringle.
- 'Let the Great Story be told' - Wood Jarvis.
- 'The British Empire and Commonwealth' - Savile.
- 'Economics of Migration' - Isaac.
- 'Migration to and from the British Isles' - Walsham.
- 'Origins and Progress' - Empire Information Service.
- 'The British Empire and Commonwealth' - Williamson.
- 'The Uprooted' - Oscar Handlin.
- 'Peopling the British Commonwealth' - McCleary.
- 'The Great Famine' - edited, Edwards and Williams.
- 'England since Waterloo' - Marriot.

Somebody once remarked that the British Empire was built through a series of fortuitous accidents and another suggested that it was acquired in a fit of absentmindedness. It is unwise to reject categorically these ideas, for both contain as we shall see, some element of truth. The Empire was made not principally as a result of the activities of exalted individuals in high places but by humble men, of the common people who left their rural homesteads for the open spaces. They went, impatient for one reason or another of life in England, carried on the wings of their ambition, and helped to perpetuate elsewhere the record of a strong nation, of sea-power, rule under law and sound government - that indeed of the British people. The qualities which they took with them have in turn become inherent in the nature of the Empire and Commonwealth. It may be said that the history of this great association is but one facet of the history of the mother country.

Generalisations are often dangerous but some general observations on emigration will probably be constructive. The decision to emigrate may result from a variety of motives - economic, political, religious, perhaps purely sentimental. Since the "economic man" who acts in accordance with his own best interests is of some importance as

a likely emigrant, let us look firstly at the economic factors which may be operative.

Considerations such as cost of living differentials will obviously be important and similarly the relative values of real incomes. But it should be remembered that the migrant is rarely motivated by temporary conditions for in leaving his homeland he normally links his prospects permanently with those of his new country. If there is competition in an increasingly imperfect labour market and with it unemployment these too will be causes for migration. If a population should increase out of all proportion to the capital, technical knowledge and natural resources at its disposal, the return per head is likely to diminish with the result that the surplus population will tend to migrate to areas where conditions are more favourable.

New countries and additional trade routes, when opened up if not when first discovered; declines in natural resources; lower costs of production overseas compared with rising costs at home; synthetic substitutes for raw materials - all of these may also in some measure account for migrations. Whilst all the factors mentioned are to some extent economic, we must not forget that there are others. Religious intolerance may push from behind whilst the

prospect of freedom to worship where, when and what one pleases has proved a preferable alternative. In addition, emigration for political and ethical reasons has nearly always been an operative factor.

Looking firstly at 1658, we should remember the change in economic thought which had taken place since the middle ages. Mercantilism had replaced particularism and universalism and with it had brought the notion that emigration if at all permissible should always be directed towards the improvement of the balance of trade of the mother country. In some cases the American colonies were not to gratify this objective and were colonized for entirely different reasons.

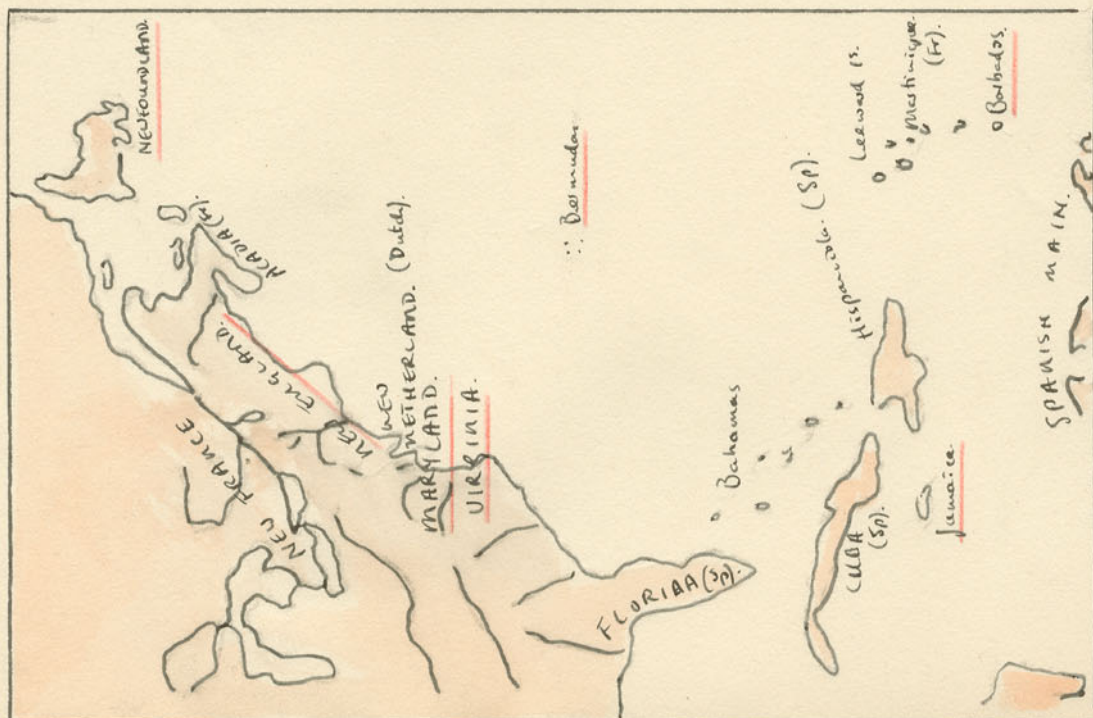
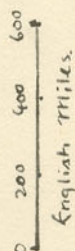
When James VI of Scotland succeeded Elizabeth there was not a square inch of British soil outside the British Isles. But gradually beginning with the Jamestown settlement under Captain Smith and followed by various others, what Selley has called the "expansion of England" took place.

In New England were colonists who, before the Toleration Act of 1689, had found life in England incompatible with their ideals and accordingly had turned westwards. The Puritans of 1620, the Massachusetts Bay Company settlers of 1629 and other refugees in the 1830's were responsible for colonizing

THE AMERICAN COLONIES and the

WEST INDIES 6 1658.

(English colonies underlined).



this part of the eastern seaboard and founding Connecticut and Rhode Island, whilst Catholics went to the West Indies where the Earl of Carlisle had received a charter.

The southern territories of Virginia, Maryland and the West Indies, although less suitable for white settlement than the New England states, were, to some extent, to gratify the ambitions of the mercantilists. They were the plantation colonies which provided England with raw materials for her industry and with the consumer goods which otherwise she would have had to import from elsewhere. Large supplies of labour for these colonies were necessary but the available native labour was insufficient. The answer was twofold; to import negroes from Africa and also to introduce white indentured labour from England. The composition of this white emigration was very diverse. Thus we find that whilst some went through compulsion - political criminals, prisoners of war, vagabonds and the children of vagabonds, others were kidnapped or induced to go under false pretences. Yet others were true immigrants and often could not afford the passage money and were prepared to undergo a period of servitude in order to recompense those who had paid it for them.

England could well afford to

let so many emigrants go without endangering her home industry, as changes in agricultural organization, particularly enclosures, had created a surplus rural population whilst wages had come down to subsistence level providing a large reserve in the labour market.

Despite this, the government was not sympathetic towards emigration and the mercantilists of the period expressed general disapproval except where their aims were realized. The ideas circulating ^{in 1658, were,} a decade later expressed by Child in a "New Discourse on Trade." Here it was held that colonialization was harmful owing to the loss in population incurred, and was effective only if it was directed to a colony where the immigrant labour provided work for Englishmen at home. Thus whilst migrations to Barbados, Jamaica and the Antilles were useful those to New England were not.

The great criticism which may be made of this mercantilist viewpoint is of course that it failed to recognize that an emigration of free and loyal subjects from the motherland was the best way - and still is, of retaining the colonies and that colonial prosperity might in the long run be more important than immediate trade advantages.

By the middle of the nineteenth century all the necessary conditions for an increase in emigration existed and with them ~~the~~ new territories. By the early 1840's the British flag was flying over four fine countries - Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa - vast in area, immeasurably rich in resources and requiring considerable numbers of settlers from the United Kingdom. Gradually, mercantilist ideas had given way to more liberal doctrines and the government looked far more favourably on emigration than it had done previously. This was bound to mean an end to that kind of migration which well found prevailed in 1658 - emigration as a result of religious intolerance. The disadvantages of religious persecution were recognized and the new conception of individual freedom could leave such matters to the individual and his conscience.

Indeed the gates of economic prosperity were now open - a prosperity which went hand in hand with the emigrations which took place. Neither could have occurred without the other. The missionary activity which followed the religious revival, the exploration which was characteristic of the period and the commercial prospecting - these three were bound so closely together that it is often difficult to say which had more importance. And at home the

population had doubled itself between 1800 and 1850 and had increased from $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions in 1750 to over 21 millions a century later. This sharp increase, despite the remarkable progress of the Industrial Revolution meant unemployment and a surplus working population.

The history of the development of the Commonwealth countries is a separate subject and need only concern us here in so far as some background to the direction of emigration is necessary. Whilst many, particularly the Irish were still going to America, a steady stream now followed in the wake of the United Empire Loyalists to Ontario and New Brunswick. These new colonists "the quiet, dull men with ploughs and pickaxes" who went to break in the virgin soil were finally accepted and overcame the tensions which their arrival had provoked. They became in the process a tough and worthy stock - the foundations of the great Canadian people.

The independence of America meant amongst other things, overcrowding in English prisons, since it had previously been the practice to transport convicts to the American colonies. West Africa having been reputed an alternative, Sir Joseph Banks suggested New South Wales. Phillip's landing at Sydney with eight hundred convicts in 1787; a

Succession of Governors - Bligh, Macquarie, Brisbane, Bowke; the merino sheep; the vine; wheat, these told the story of the development of Australia whilst she divided into separate states each of whom had achieved independent self government by 1855-'59. But whilst the farmer's boy was crossing the Atlantic, it was the farmer's son who turned northwards, for the passage was longer and more expensive.

In 1829, a book entitled 'A Letter from Sydney' was published. Whilst the development of South Australia had, to some extent been a test of its authors principles, Edward Gibbon Wakefield worked to far greater purpose in the cause of New Zealand. Early in the century a trickle of immigration had begun, the newcomers being mostly men which no country wants, but by 1858 the picture was different. Various schemes, the most notable of which was Wakefield's New Zealand Company, were instrumental in persuading the Government that if the country was not peopled by the right kind of colonists, it would be populated by the wrong kind. Difficulties which followed the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 when New Zealand was annexed, were gradually overcome. Once more, as in Australia, the sheep may be said to have carried the country on its back towards prosperity, but the successful settlement of New



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Zealand was largely due to the exceptional ability and energy of the immigrants who were carefully selected in Britain before going out to help build up a nation whose character is now quite distinctive.

The acquisition of the Cape of Good Hope had come about as a maritime adventure in the French War and without any prescience of the fact that it would lead to the establishment of British South Africa. After the war, emigration to the Cape began and in 1819, assisted passages were approved by Parliament. Comparison with the other dominions shows that the problems of the Cape - it was by no means an "empty" area, meant a comparatively smaller volume of immigration but we find both the farmer's son and the farmer's boy going to Natal and Cape Province - the first as an alternative to Oceania the second having been diverted from Canada.

Some of the general trends of the nineteenth century which were influential factors in emigration from Britain in 1858 have already been noted. Largely they were economic and nowhere more pressing than in Ireland. The birth rate had always exceeded the death rate by a wide margin and between 1700 and 1840, for example, the population had grown from 1,250,000 to 8,000,000. The great famine of the forties hastened what was an inevitable

migration which continued until 1914. Most of it was to America but some was directed at South Africa and Canada where also were found many Scottish settlers. Changes in the agricultural system and the gradual break up of the clans had accounted for considerable transatlantic migration.

Those who like to remember the middle of the nineteenth century as a revival of the age of the first Elizabeth will point to those emigrants who have not been mentioned, those whose motives cannot be defined and limited and whose inspiration was a pure love of adventure. Without them and their progenitors there would have been no story to tell.

Thus we come to 1958 and the reasons which prompt a man to apply for an assisted passage, pack his belongings and start afresh in a Commonwealth territory. Only too often in writings on this subject, the political views of the author are apparent and this is surely wrong. One must, to be objective take an detached a view as is possible. Since the would be emigrant is a comparatively young man let us look at his motives in particular.

The younger generation has found several reasons for discontent much of which is justifiable. But some is not and it is this which produces the man who

wants to leave Britain for entirely negative reasons. He will not make a good immigrant for motives of this kind are never enough. Discontent is not always divine and only too often turns out to be a chronic disease which a change in latitude and longitude will not cure. One must look forward to all that is good on the other side then back to all that is bad here for positive aims are surely necessary. Fortunately the average immigrant possesses them and that is why he succeeds.

The majority of those leaving today are not surplus payers (who it is said have every reason for emigrating) but wage earners, not executives but craftsmen. The working man who has never before been so prosperous is emigrating with the hope and knowledge that in return for hard work and co-operation, even greater prosperity will be found.

When an austere Budget hits Britain there is always more talk of emigration, especially among the young and talented who threaten to emigrate and take their talents with them. Why they should regard this as a threat is not easily understandable for these are surely the people the Commonwealth needs. Other material considerations such as housing difficulties often account for emigration and indeed there are a proportion of immigrants in whom the idea to ~~leave~~ leave

spring from desperation rather than inspiration. Less tangible reasons also exist and there are many who feel genuinely ^{stake} in Britain and decide to emigrate. The over urbanization of the country and the conditions which this has brought partially account for feelings of this kind. In the Autumn of 1956, many viewed the Suez affair as a catastrophe presaging Britain's decline and spoke of emigration from a land of which they professed to be ashamed. But few in fact did emigrate and those who did had been considering the project for some time previously.

Despite this the average new-Australasian or new-Canadian is not a pipe dreamer but has his feet firmly earthbound. He has energy, enthusiasm and hope. He will need all of these and more besides. Initiative, strength of purpose, resilience, adaptability, courage; all of these qualities will be necessary in the emigrant. And most will possess them. That is why the proportion of failures is so small and so few return to Britain.

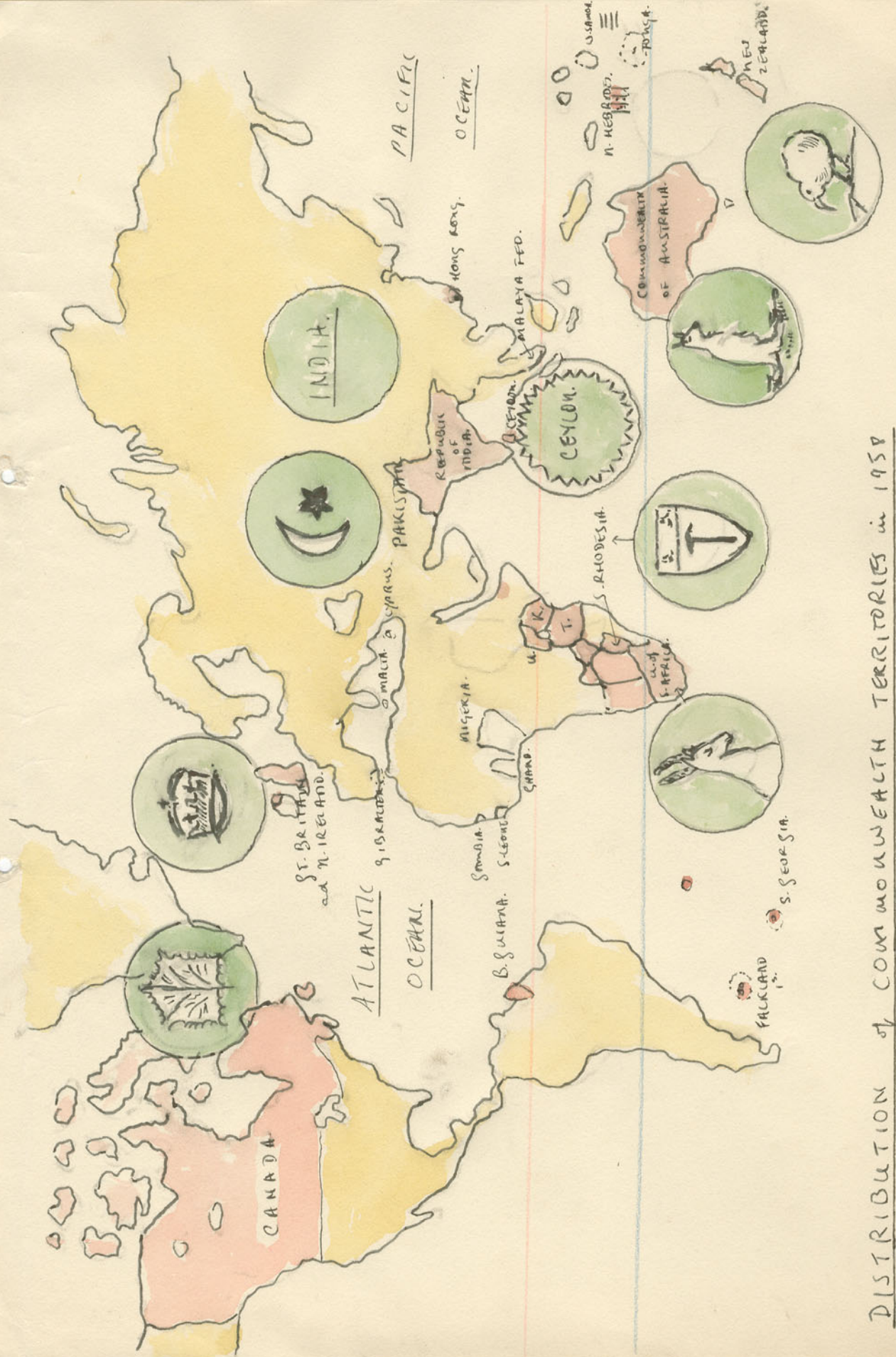
This success is also partially attributable to the immigration schemes which are operated by many commonwealth countries. Through these schemes unsuitable migrants are detected and in one way or another, dissuaded

from making a mistake. If emigration were easier then we should find a larger proportion of failures.

Various schemes for mass migration have been devised. They suggest that large migrations from Britain to the Commonwealth would be beneficial in many ways, and support their arguments by reference to the fact that we now have an optimum population whilst parts of the Commonwealth, Australia especially, badly need more people. Further, if new Australians do not come from Britain they will come from other European countries and this would hardly strengthen the Commonwealth.

In 1958, we are faced with a very different sort of association from that of the Old Empire of Cromwell's time or that of the Victorian ~~era~~ era. Similarly the motives which are taking men to the Commonwealth now are different from those of the mid-nineteenth century and different again from those of three centuries ago. But there is no reason to suppose that the story is by any means finished and the difficulties facing us today will be remembered only as illustrations of the British and Commonwealth ability to conquer circumstances. Perhaps indeed the most important chapters have yet to be written and that as the association matures the rôle of the Commonwealth in world

affairs will increase. As it does so
and its vital influence is felt we
shall feel an even greater satisfaction
in what is probably our finest
achievement and shall remember the
advice of Sir Winston Churchill when
he told us that "it is only by
reading the story of the British Empire
that one may feel a well grounded
sense of pride to dwell in these
Islands.



DISTRIBUTION of COMMONWEALTH TERRITORIES in 1958