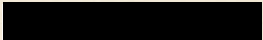


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ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY ESSAY COMPETITION, 1958.

CLASS A

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CONTRAST THE PRINCIPAL MOTIVES FOR MIGRATION
FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM TO COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES
IN 1958 WITH THOSE OF 1858 AND 1658.

SUMMARY

The essay begins with an outline of the principal events that occurred between the middle of the fifteenth and that of the sixteenth century, and deals with the factors then existing which caused migration from the United Kingdom. It then goes on to show that as time goes by, the motives for which people emigrate also change, until in the middle of the nineteenth century the main reason for widespread migration was the enticement of free land and mineral wealth development. Two centuries previously, the reason had been mainly one of fear of both religious and political persecution. Now, in 1958, circumstances have again altered and with them the different motives of the people of the United Kingdom for migration to Commonwealth countries. In the present age migration is methodically and scientifically arranged, the right people being chosen for the right place. The essay ends with a reflection on how the present stream of immigrants into the United Kingdom may affect future migration from it.

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The Main Essay

To understand the different reasons for migration from the United Kingdom in 1658, one must go back in history for some years because, since history is not made in any one year but rather in a succession of years, the history of any one year cannot be thoroughly understood unless its connection with events which sometimes took place long before are thoroughly understood. The years between 1618 and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642 were very hard for the mass of Englishmen. The social and economic conditions then prevailing caused widespread unemployment and a great increase in the number of paupers. The protracted wars in Europe had deprived England of her outlet for cloth and other exports, on which a large portion of her population depended. Government was unable to obtain enough money by ordinary taxation, and so the traditional royal dues were drastically exacted. Along with this economic and political unrest, there was general dissatisfaction with the government of the Church. All these factors combined together to promote the flow of settlers across the Atlantic in such numbers that that period has been very rightly called "The Great Emigration".

By 1658, the monarchy was in exile and Oliver Cromwell had already been in supreme power as Lord Protector for five years. The Long Parliament, the last parliament of Charles the First, had been convened in 1640 and was not officially dissolved until 1660. During the course of its existence, it persecuted Anglicans, Baptists, and various other sects. Prior to this, Archbishop Laud's terrible persecution of Puritans drove thousands of them to settle elsewhere, most notably in the West Indies and along the west coast of North America. Rhode Island was founded in 1636 as a Puritan settlement.

/England at ...

England at that time (1658) was rife with plots and counterplots. The people were unsettled by the frequent dissolution of Parliaments. Cromwell's rule, although better than that of the Stuarts', was despotic in essence. The wars he waged against Spain and Holland incurred heavy expenses, and these had to be paid for by heavy taxation of the ordinary people. Many Englishmen were therefore forced to leave their homeland and migrate to other countries. English Quakers, Irish Presbyterians, Catholics and Scottish Jacobites fled to New England which had already been settled by the English since 1620, when it was granted to the "Council of Plymouth". Maryland passed the Toleration Act in 1649, and thus induced many Protestants to emigrate to this Roman Catholic province. Connecticut received many emigrants also, who settled mostly in Windsor and Wethersfield. Delaware and Massachusetts also had their share of settlers. Virginia, too, received settlers from England who came with the hope of rapid wealth in her tobacco and sugar, which were cared for by slaves and indented servants.

The West Indies also proved a kind host to English settlers. Originally, the acquisition of these islands as colonies was merely to facilitated indirect attacks on Spain, which derived much of her revenue from the West Indies. The reason for the settlement of the West Indies was much the same as that for the settlement of Massachusetts or Virginia. The people were convinced that in England there were more men than jobs or land, while in the New World there were more jobs and land than men. The organizers of new colonies at that time could always find men ready to try their luck. Government approved or did not oppose the growth of settlements which could serve as dumping-grounds for felons, paupers or schismatics, and which might produce 'naval stores' or other useful commodities. England, in short, undertook colonies of settlement rather than of trade or exploration, at least in those days, both in the North American colonies and in the West Indian colonies.

/England's West ...

England's West Indian Empire was greatly enlarged by the capture of Jamaica. Jamaica itself, however, never became a true colony of settlement despite the fact that English officers and men received grants of land to plant and settle, chiefly in the fertile, well-watered lands of the Rio Minho valley, for many of them died and few succeeded. Despite government propaganda, despite low taxation and the promise of virgin land, there was no great wave of emigration towards Barbados and the Leewards. But Jamaica was well placed for trade and was the key to the Indies, so Cromwell resolved from the first to retain it. The West Indian archipelago at that time included the Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, the Windward Islands, the Leeward Islands, and a number of smaller islands. There was no lack of emigrants, for the miserable condition of a landless labourer in England and the lure of free land in the West Indies combined to supply a powerful incentive. During 1657 and 1658, experienced colonists from Barbados and elsewhere were introduced into Jamaica.

Besides this voluntary emigration, the colonies of England were peopled in another way. Criminals and persons of bad repute or of low moral tone were often deported and settled as colonists. Many Irish prisoners were sent to the Barbados between the years 1649-1753. Shipload after shipload of Irish prisoners were also sent over the sea for sale into forced labour in Jamaica and the West Indies. In Ireland itself, Cromwell continued Elizabeth's policy of planting English and Scottish yeomen. Ulster and Leinster were settled by new waves of the English and the Scotch. Many soldiers were paid off by giving them land in Ireland.

/From 1658 to ...

From 1658 to 1858 is a period of two hundred years. During this time the population of England increased only very gradually till the time of the Industrial Revolution when there was a sudden upward trend. Hence, after an elapse of two hundred years, the Britain of 1858 had to cope with the problem created by a growing surplus population. Furthermore, there was no provision for the unemployed other than the workhouse. A stream of emigrants, therefore, poured out of the island. The West Indies had long become an unattractive prospect to the white settler, the only reason for its former prosperity lying in the fact that there were slaves to work the plantations. After the Emancipation Act, however, labourers had to be hired and paid for, sometimes at high cost. Besides this, England had also lost her North American possessions, so that she sought out new colonies of settlement. Some of the emigrants went to the United States, but a greater volume went to Canada, Australasia, and South Africa. The Atlantic passage attracted those of the poorer class, being shorter and cheaper, while the Australian voyage attracted a better class of emigrant.

Ireland, too, had its emigrants, but for a different reason. The Irish peasant of the time was often rack-rented by his English and Irish landlords who put no capital into the land and made no improvements. It was the lot of the peasant to maintain everything on the farm. The great famine of 1845-46, due to the failure of the potato crop, caused a wholesale exodus to the United States and the Colonies. This emigration continued until the end of the century and reduced the population of the overcrowded island by almost fifty per cent.

/Although the ...

Although the United States continued to receive immigrants in large numbers, yet this flow soon decreased towards the end of the nineteenth century because all the free land had been already occupied and the price of American farms was high. Then the flood of homesteaders which had been pouring into the United States poured into Canada. The Government aided the immigrants by building Canadian railroads farther west. Canada was slowly and gradually peopled, with no events of any special significance worth mentioning until the year 1856, when gold was discovered in the area near the River Fraser. Thousands of people hastened by sea and land to make their fortunes in the new Eldorado. Newfoundland was settled by a hardy type of fisherman who went to catch codfish. Many of these English fishermen brought Irish servants who intermarried and settled there.

The first settlers in Australia were confronted with grave difficulties - the cost of living was high, food was scarce and there were floods and famines. The inexperienced settlers in Australia also suffered from lack of capital and suitable labour was difficult to obtain. The inducement which made Englishmen to out to a convict colony (which it then was) had to be great. But it was soon realized that a country life of ease and affluence was possible through the ownership of a sheep run in Australia. By 1858, most of the old difficulties had been surmounted. The land laws were modified and measures were taken to extend settlements. New areas of fertile land were discovered and were quickly settled on and exploited. The wool industry was established and Australian wool soon became an important element in world commerce. The discovery of gold brought even greater prosperity. The influx of immigrants this brought about was the greatest which any British colony had ever seen. Instead of pouring out under the drag of distress, the high-spirited youth of the day rushed off to

the gold fields with enthusiasm. The old days of settling paupers and convicts which produced so few good settlers in the end, were nearly over. Emigration became spontaneous, both for adventure and for settlement.

Following upon the colonization of Australia came that of New Zealand. It began in a very different manner from that of Australia. Most of the first settlers on this fertile island were traders, seamen, runaway convicts and other white men of doubtful character. There were ~~whalers~~ who made their way to the Bay of Islands on the eastern side of the northernmost peninsula. Some were migratory but others settled permanently in a society without law or government. By the middle of the nineteenth century, there were several companies undertaking the task of arranging scientific migration to New Zealand. The ease with which land was purchased from the native Maoris attracted many settlers. Fear of French settlement caused the British Government to settle New Zealand and Australia quickly. With the coming of the steamship into general use another stumbling block to previous migration was overcome, and immigrants could travel with much greater ease.

Australia soon refused to take any more prisoners from England so another place had to be found in which to dump the unwelcome cargo. This was strengthened by the desire of the British Government to possess a good naval station on the road to the east. And just as fear of the French precipitated the decision to occupy New Zealand, so the calls for help to secure recognition of their independence which the Boer settlers made to Holland caused the English authorities to act more resolutely not to abandon their claims of overlordship in South Africa. Settlers were

/sent out in ...

sent out in 1820, and by the fifties the population of Natal rose to over 8,000. The Colonial Government paid the passage of emigrants and under this impetus the slow and shabby little ships made their way across the ocean. The emigrants were selected so as to include professional men, tradesmen, and mechanics, but very few farmers for it was in the towns that over-pressure of population was most acute; so the experiment was conducted with the dual motive of relieving distress at home and at the same time the improving of things in Cape Colony. The Natal colonists started to development sugar-planting and resorted to the importation of coolies from India. The discovery of mineral wealth also contributed in giving fresh life to British Africa.

Another part of the British Commonwealth which received United Kingdom settlers at that time was India. The number, however, was quite small and did not measure up to the number migrating to Australia or Canada. Some opportunity was open to the better educated and well-to-do types who were able to withstand the climate. In spite of the climate and bad laws, many new settlers tried their fortune in tea, indigo and hemp because of the good price commanded by them.

The hundred years from 1858 to 1958 have been, perhaps, the years of most rapid development in the history of the world, especially in the application of science to the improvement of agriculture, industry, transportation and living conditions generally. With the opening of the Suez and Panama canals, communication by sea has now become very much easier and faster than a century ago, while travel by air has made tremendous strides in thirty years and can yet be said to be only in its infancy.

/During the last ...

During the last hundred years the population of Great Britain has more than trebled. This has brought greater perspective the importance of a steady flow of emigrants from densely-populated Britain to the sparsely populated Dominions with their large reserves of undeveloped natural resources. Also, the Dominions are less exposed to air attack than Britain, and in the event of another world war it may be difficult to protect the people of Great Britain from death through bombing or starvation and the industries of Great Britain from destruction. Once the war has started, it will be too late for evacuation overseas. The case for mass emigration does not rest merely on the fear of a new war. The economic and social disadvantages of high population densities are also factors as are the disadvantages of low densities to the Dominions. The British Government during the post-war years, has therefore supported emigration to the Dominions. The main motives for the promotion of emigration has been the wish to strengthen the links with the Dominions to ease the persistent manpower shortages in their essential industries - apart altogether from political and humanitarian conditions. At present there are about 500,000 unemployed in Britain, or about 2.2 per cent of the population - the highest since the last war. To encourage emigration from Britain, the Government is willing to assist those financially unstable. Also, societies have been formed to help the prospective emigrant. One of these is the Oversea Service, a non-profit-making organization formed in 1953. It is the combined effort of the Conference of British Missionary Societies, the British Council of Churches, the Colonial Office, the Y.M.C.A., the Imperial Institute and a few businessmen. Its aim is to provide people going abroad with a background of the economic, political and social conditions in the country to which the emigrant is going.

/The chief ...

The chief receiving countries are Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Canada is still rich in undeveloped mineral resources. Iron, nickel, zinc, copper, lead and even gold and uranium have been discovered and are being mined. This also provides employment for many of the native Eskimos, who are often on the verge of starvation. The north of Canada has not yet been explored thoroughly and it is possible that even greater development lies ahead. Already the north pole is being used as an air-route.

Australia is another great receiver of immigrants from the British Isles. Its productivity is constantly being increased. Land, once considered unsuitable, is now bearing crops or growing rich pasture. Industries are expanding and new ones are being established. Population is increasing by large-scale immigration. Overseas capital in hundreds of millions of pounds is being invested in new enterprises. New dams are being constructed and irrigation projects are being developed. Public works of enormous dimensions are under way and full employment is being maintained. During the first six months of this year (1958) she accepted about 18,000 immigrants from the United Kingdom, or roughly almost half the total number of immigrants. Probably an equal number will migrate and settle there permanently in the next half year. Much attention is being paid at present to the Australian possession of Papua, where a persistent search for oil is being maintained. If there should prove to be really workable oil deposits, many more people may be attracted there hoping for wealth in the oil-fields. Other settlers from the United Kingdom find homes in New Zealand, South Africa, East Africa and other parts of the Commonwealth, but these numbers are so small as to be insignificant.

/It may thus ...

It may thus be seen that while migration from the United Kingdom has always been present from 1658 up to the present, whether it was by sailing ship or modern steamers, or now by aeroplane, yet there have been different reasons prompting this migration. A society, in order to maintain some sort of equilibrium, has to have some sort of control over its population, and this must be done in conjunction with a study of the different reasons for migration. In 1658, religious persecution and political intolerance was a very strong motive for migration, while in 1858 many people were attracted by thoughts of brighter prospects and free land in new continents, the conditions at home being often intolerable. In this modern year of 1958, migration is scientifically carried out. Its necessity is completely recognized and government is willing to assist those who need help, especially educated people like technicians and teachers. Also the governments receiving the immigrants are willing to and are actually giving help to settle those who wish to immigrate. The reason is mainly to distribute evenly the population of the Commonwealth, relieving over-crowded England and helping to provide man-power for the less densely-populated Dominions. Concurrent with all this migration from Britain into Commonwealth countries, the reverse is happening also. People are migrating from Commonwealth areas such as Barbados and other parts of the West Indies into Britain in great numbers willing to supply cheap labour. While the immediate effect of this may not be noticeable, yet it is conceivable that it may have serious consequences upon emigration from the United Kingdom in the long run.

/List of books ...

LIST OF BOOKS CONSULTED

The Cambridge History of The British Empire

A Short History of the West Indies,
by Parry and Sherlock

History of the World,
by Clare

Cassell's History of England

Australian Colonial Policy,
by Legge

British Colonial Development, 1774-1834,
by Harlow and Madden

A Short History of British Expansion,
by Williamson

The Story of Colonization,
Issued by the B.B.C.

British Post-War Migration,
by Isaac

A Short History of the English People
by John Richard Green

The Commonwealth in Brief,
Issued by the British Council

Britain and the South Seas,
by Sir Harry Luke

Britain and West Africa,
by Joyce Cary

Many other reviews and periodicals such as "The Listener" and "Commonwealth Today". Encyclopaedias such "The World Book Encyclopaedia" and "Encyclopaedia Britannica" have also been consulted.

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