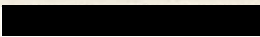


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ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY ESSAY COMPETITION, 1960.

CLASS B

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"Choose any two countries of the Commonwealth,  
Discuss how they differ and what they have in Common."

We often hear people talking about "ends of the world."  
This is never so true as when applying to Britain and New Zealand.  
It is well-known that Britain, in the northern Hemisphere, is  
crossed by the zero degree longitude at Greenwich, while amazingly  
coincidental is the fact that in the southern Hemisphere, in the  
vicinity of the one hundred and eighty degrees longitude lies New  
Zealand. At the premier glance they appear as two similar islands,  
similar in the sense that both of them are comparatively small  
and long. But a closer scrutinization shows that New Zealand is  
composed of two islands separated by the Cook Strait. They are  
both washed by an ocean on one side and a sea on the other ———  
Britain by the Atlantic and the North Sea, while New Zealand is  
bathing in the South Pacific Water and Tasman Sea's brine. Though  
both of them have continents as neighbours, Britain is separated  
from Europe of the old world by a channel which is so narrow that  
swimmers can cross it, while New Zealand is a thousand miles away  
from Australia which is included in the New World.

The earliest British settlers in New Zealand were able  
to make New Zealand their permanent abode because in there they  
found a climate similar in many respects to that back in home —  
Britain, for both, lying in the path of prevailing westerlies,  
and being influenced by the sea, have mild, moist climate. Going  
into the details, we will find that the eastern South Island is  
closest in climatic conditions to that of South-east England,  
while, strange to say in the western part of the South Island of  
New Zealand, the climate resembles that of western England.

In Britain, one is never erring when he commences a talk  
by "to day's weather ....." for there is always so much to be  
talked about. How the British weather varies in short leases of  
time. Even if it is raining cats and dogs now, to-morrow you may  
find a bright sun smiling at you from a blue sky which is locked  
up in such a deep angry, gloomy frown now! This is due to the  
series of "lows" or depressions separated by wedges of "highs"  
which sweep across the country. The South Island of New Zealand,



throughout the year also lies on the path of temperate depressions.

But New Zealand's climate is not precisely a second edition of British climate. Because New Zealand is environed by bigger pieces of brine, its climate is more insolar than that of Britain. This can be proved by the fact that London's range of temperature is nearly twenty-four degrees while Auckland's is just over fifteen degrees Fahrenheit.

A glance of the globe indicatls the fact that New Zealand is fifteen degrees nearer to the equator than Britain is. Thus subsequently it follows that in Britain, farmers often complain about damp sunless summers which spoil crops' ripening, while New Zealand has sunshine records that are generally comparable to, and sometimes exceed those of the Mediterranean areas.

When the climate of these two countries are relayed, then even a school-boy in the lowest form can procedly say, "I know: then their natural vegetation must be forests & woodlands. Good ! Little Boy ! But I would like to tell you that New Zealand, having heavier rainfall & higher temperature has dense evergreen forests growing up from a tangled mess of undergrowth in Westland, where, twining from tree to tree run the long stems of the rata whose crimson blossoms brighten the dark forests in late summer, while south of England decidrons oaks, hazels, birches, and chest-nuts tower majestically over the heavy clay soil.

More than two-thirds of Scotland, one-third of Wales, and nearly one-eighth of England are covered by a rough vegetation of heather, peat and moorland. New Zealand is not devoid of such swampy lands — in the Wanganue and Taranaki Lowlands, and also in the low and flat Auckland Peninsulas, there occur peaty, swampy land. But while the Scottish swamps are used only for shooting, and the moorlands near large towns are valuable as open spaces upon which people climb and breathe in fresh air which is rare in the crowded metropolis, the swampy lands in the Wanganui are artificial-ly drained for cattee-rearing grounds, and the Auckland moorlands

yield a mineral product — or shall I call it a vegetable product? — which is the gum or resin from old trees which fell and decayed beneath the peat, and which after being dug out, is in valuable for the making of varnishes.

Jane Auster let Pemberley to become the cradle of Elizabeth Bennet's love for Darcy. Indeed such a beautiful lake district is suited to romances. New Zealand too has a land of lakes and rivers, namely the Otago region in which New Zealand's biggest river, Clutha passes through several of the largest lakes in the island. But strange to say, the Lake District, Cumbria, lies in western Britain, that is to say, it lies in a place where the annual rainfall records from thirty inches to sixty inches; while Otago is so dry and bleak that even grass is poor and scanty.

Having seen what nature has done with the land, let us proceed to see what men do with it. Though many British farms are mixed, it can be roughly put down as pastoral farming predominant in the wetter part with heavy soil, arable farming in drier ones with light soil, and mixed farming in the Downlands. In New Zealand, pastoral farming is much more carried out than arable farming. The Mountain sheep rearing of Britain on the Moorlands are more valuable for the production of fine, sweet-flavoured joints than for their wool. But in New Zealand it is different. North Island is best suited to the Romney Marsh sheep, reared for meat, while in the highly improved pastures of South Island, Marino sheep give the finest wool. Both Britain and New Zealand rear cattle for a double purpose. They serve to supply both beef and dairy produce. Cattle are reared in the Midlands and north-east Scotland in Britain, while in New Zealand they concentrate in the North Island. Dairy cattle are usually more lucky, as they get the best pastures and the most vigilant care, while beef-cattle are only fattened before their ill-fated death.

In Britain, wheat is cultivated in the good ploughlands. For barley, poorer soil will do. There are also very good crops



of oats and root-crop with sugar beet as the most important one, supplying one-third of the sugar used. Similarly in New Zealand, wheat, oat and maize are grown in the valleys and fertile coastal strips, especially in Otago and the Canterbury Plains. Actually mixed farming is carried out here, as cattle are also reared. Mixed farming in Britain takes place in a four course rotation where crops are grown and sheep foddered alternately on a fourterly divided field.

New Zealand's resources are poor except for coal mining of 2,000,000 tons per annum, which is just sufficient for domestic use. The rest, she has to depend on her agricultural wealth. Coal is also widely mined both in open-cast and deep mining in Britain especially in Central Valley of Scotland, Midlands of England and South Wales. Apart from this, and the little gold in Wales and Southern Scotland, and iron in Cumberland, other minerals are no longer extensively worked.

So far, New Zealand and Britain do not show any great difference between them. But apart from the geographic conditions, they do differ a lot. For example their background — their history can hardly be said to be similar. When Captain Cook first discovered the two islands of New Zealand, Britain had already left a long history behind her. New Zealand was but a new-born baby when compared with grandpapa — England. Many interesting happenings had already occurred in Britain when New Zealand was still a blank in men's mind : The great ice sheet had covered Britain and had retreated ..... the tundra condition had given place to flourishing forests ..... Neolithin people had begun to till the soil, domesticate animals while using stone implements in self-defence against cave-lions, cave-bears, sabre-toothed lions, rhinoceroes, and musk-oxen. When the Romans invaded Britain, it was already inhabited by the Celts. The Romans pushed Britain a mighty step further towards civilization. They set up cities, raised stone buildings, built roads and fortified the country.

At last the Romans evacuated Britain because of home problems, only to give the Angles, Saxons and Jutes a free hand to invade Britain. They swept the Celtic to Highland Britain and occupied Lowland Britain themselves, setting up kingdoms over Eastern England. But Britain was fated against peace. Vikings successively plundered its coast during the eighth, ninth and the tenth century. Following this came the Norman Conquest, introducing the feudal system, as the followers of William the Conqueror lived in castles with serfs working for them. Thus Britain continued to develop, advancing step by step towards prosperity. It was when Britain mounted to one of the most powerful country in Europe that Captain Cook first reached the islands of New Zealand. The land was then occupied by Maoris, a tall, well-built race. Though they knew nothing of metal and pottery making they were far from being primitive. Then houses of timber were artfully carved, and their clothes were made of feathers, leaves and bark. They lived in tribes and clans. After the discovery, New Zealand became a British colony, and soon British settlers emigrated there. The Maoris were greatly reduced by warfare and disease. Nearly all the surviving ones dwell in the North Island now, forming one-tenth of the population. After a while, the British settlers decided to stand on their own feet. At last they obtained their independence in 1852. But they remain a member of the Commonwealth, recognizing the Queen as their head. Though separated from their mother country, New Zealand's government closely resembles that of Britain. To represent the Queen, the head of England, she has a governor general to represent her; there too, exist a house of representatives to stand for the House of Commons and the Lords in the British Parliament. Like Britain, she also has a cabinet.

As to religion, both have the Church of England as the state's religion. But the number of Roman Catholics in New Zealand exceeds that of England. There are of course many other Churches like the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches.



Like its history, British Literature dates back far into the ancient times — to 600 A.D. which started with the Anglo-Saxon's invasion, while the earliest possible date of New Zealand's Literature is in the late eighteenth century when New Zealand was first discovered. Two centuries of development can give New Zealand but an immature literature with writers such as William Pember Reeves (1857-1922), whose masterpiece "The long white Clond" describes New Zealand's growth in wealth and her startling social advances, and is regarded as the best book written about New Zealand. While, in the history of British Literature dazzling stars like William Shakspeare, Dickens, Byron, Keats and Shelley shine unceasingly.

New Zealand's literature began with the letters and journals of the first missionary Samuel Marsden which were not designed for publication. Then arose narratives of New Zealand's life in early days. English Literature, however, has an entirely defferent start. The Anglo-Saxon brought with them a virile and well-established poetry preserved only by oral tradition for recitation. Under the influence of established Christianity, the oral poetry, which dealt chiefly with heroic deeds in an aristocratic diction of traditional dignity and in an illiterated rythm, was adopted to biblical heroic themes and divine praises. New Zealand's poetry is more British than local. For, at an early stage, victorian verse was imported and imitated, an act which excited local interest only, though some poets managed to get British publishers. New Zealand's present day poetry showed traces of social tension during the depression years, especially in the works of Renolf A.K. Mason, Rex Tranburn and Allen Curnow. Renolf speaks for the Jarmland, the starving bushy, the rebel, and the outcast. Rex wrote beautiful lyrics like "He shall not use" "Dominion" which show development from the clever but bitter satires. Allen's verse was always very accomplished. New Zealand now shows that she is adequate, and that she no longer looks abroad for themes, style

or pattern.

In British literature's history, Jane Austen was famous for her "Pride and Prejudice" while the Bronte sisters infused into English fictions the passionate intensity of their lonely introspective lives, and Mary Ann Evans, under the rom-de-pheme of George Eliot had a group of ethical, religions and intellectual problems which distinguish her sharply from the popular novelists of her time, while Frankenstein, written by Mary Shelley, who piled a new scientific element on the terrors, survives as a marvel of speculation for the brain of a girl of nineteen. But generally speaking, English man writers, like William Blake, Robert Burns, Coleridge, Defoe, Dickens, Lord Tennyson, Sir Walter Scott, Robert Browning, Byron and so on, greatly out number woman writers. New Zealand's fiction writers have greatly changed from that of its early days. For example Iris Wilkinson's "Passport to Hell", Frank Sargeson's "Comersation with any uncle" John Mulgan's "Man Alone" all introduce characlers never written before ——— characters of men and women who now consider New Zealand more their "home" than Britain.

All in all, New Zealand can be said to be the best resemblance of Britain, the Chief state of the Commonwealth, of which she herself is a member.

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