

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETS AT JAMESTOWN

The London Company has authorized a new form of government for its colony in Virginia. The colony has been governed by martial law since 1610 and there have been many complaints about the severity of the laws and punishments. The new treasurer of the company, Sir Edwin Sandys, has decided to abolish martial law and allow the colonists to have representative government similar to what we have in England. Under the new charter, the colony is still to have a governor assisted by a Council of Government. However, the governor no longer has absolute authority as he did under the Martial Law Period. Most of his actions will now need the approval of his council before they go into effect.

The greatest change comes in the creation of the General Assembly. Men in the colony are to elect “burgesses” or delegates to represent them. The elected burgesses will meet with the governor and his council to make the laws for the colony. The laws, of course, will then have to be approved by the London Company.

We understand that the meeting of the first General Assembly took place in the church in Jamestown from July 30<sup>th</sup> to August 4<sup>th</sup> of this year. It was a significant occasion for the colony and all reports say that the colonists have responded to it with great enthusiasm.

A court system has also been established following English Common Law. Not only do the settlers in Virginia now have some control over the laws that govern them, they also have the protection of the law and a court where differences can be settled.