

## KING JAMES I GRANTS CHARTER TO VIRGINIA CO.

On April 10 King James I granted a charter to the newly formed Virginia Company giving them the right to explore and settle the English territory in North America known as Virginia. The late Queen, Elizabeth I, gave possession of these lands to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1584 so that he could establish an English colony in the region. It was Raleigh who named the area “Virginia” in honor of Queen Elizabeth—the “Virgin Queen”. However, his efforts in 1585 and 1587 to establish a colony on Roanoke Island were not successful. Indeed, the group of 117 men, women and children who tried to settle there in 1587 simply disappeared. A supply ship arriving at the island in 1590 found the site abandoned and no trace of the colonists. A mystery to this day!

Let us hope that the Virginia Company has more success. For there are many in this country who believe that England **must** establish colonies in North America to compete with her rivals—Spain and France. Then, too, it is well known that North America is a land of fabulous wealth—full of gold, silver and precious gems and other natural resources. Why should England not profit from this wealth? A colony in Virginia would provide a perfect base from which to explore for the Northwest Passage—that elusive strait through North America that leads to the Pacific Ocean and the riches of the East. And as we have consistently pointed out in this paper, colonies provide a perfect place to send the growing number of unemployed persons who fill our towns and cities. Also, is it not our duty to bring our form of Christianity to the native peoples?

It appears to be important, then, for England to establish colonies in Virginia, but the stumbling block has always been how to finance such a venture. It is rumored that Raleigh lost a fortune trying to settle Roanoke Island. No one person is prepared to back such a risky business. That is why the Virginia Company has been formed. It is a joint-stock company. Wealthy merchants and members of government have been invited to buy stock in the company. Investors can “adventure” as much money as they can afford. The risk to each investor is small and all will share proportionately in the profits. Enough money can be raised in this manner to finance a settlement and keep it going until it can exist on its own. It seems an excellent idea and we wish them well.

We understand that the Virginia Company will have two branches—the Plymouth Company based in Plymouth, England and the London Company based in London. The Plymouth Company will settle the northern part of Virginia and the London Company will settle the southern part.