

into which the Bermudas are still divided for ecclesiastical and political purposes at the present day.

The division into tribes formed the basis for the representative institutions which were established in the Bermudas after the first few years of the settlement, subject to the authority of the Company at home. In addition to the Governor and his Council, mainly composed of officials, there were General Sessions held twice a year for judicial purposes, to which each tribe sent six representatives and the common land twelve; and a General Assembly, held once in every two years, which included the Governor and Council, and to which each tribe sent four representatives and the common land eight.

The Bermudas were the second British colony to receive some form of Representative Government. The first Assembly was held in 1620, one year after a similar institution had been established in Virginia, and the constitution was revised and fully detailed in 1622.

The Bermudas were under the government of the Company during the reigns of James the First and Charles the First, the period of the Commonwealth, and the reign of Charles the Second. By 1629 the population had grown to between two and three thousand, and the colony attained sufficient importance to be described as 'an excellent bit to rule a great horse'.¹ In 1656 the number of inhabitants was given at about 3,000, and by 1679 it had risen to 8,000, including women, children, and slaves².

The elements of the population included English planters, tenants of absentee proprietors, negro slaves, first mentioned about 1617, Indian slaves shipped off from Massachusetts by a law passed in 1652, and white bond-servants, in great measure Scotch and Irish political prisoners³.

¹ From *The Relation of Robert Chestevan and others*, quoted in Smith's *Virginia*.

² In Blome's *Jamaica* [1672] it is described as a powerful English colony, having about four or five thousand inhabitants.

³ In 1661 the governor issued a proclamation against a projected rising of Irish and negroes.