

New Zealand's Part in "UNRRA"



DR. R. M. CAMPBELL
"A matter of first concern to us"

(continued from previous page)

Meanwhile there are problems, of course. Just back in Washington from Atlantic City I asked an American friend these two questions: First, will America continue rationing after the war so as to help other people needing relief, and, second, will she, during the war, impose more severe rationing than now? "Unfortunately," answered my friend, "I am afraid the answer may be 'no' to both questions." But the answer went on to tell me of a voluntary organisation just set up under the name of "Food for Freedom." Its purpose, or one purpose, is to get America to give a "yes" answer to both these questions. I felt, and still feel, that the questions go so much to the heart of things that I called on the organisation in Washington. I saw its organiser, a fine man named Howard Weston, and, pardonably, I hope, I asked him why he had started this movement. His answer I found significant enough to quote. "In the last war," he said, "I was working with the British in Persia in areas that had suffered in the war. I saw little children starving, dying, some of them after living for months on acorns and grass, trying to tear flesh from dead army mules." And so this American, with help that is to me encouraging, is pressing forward in a movement that is linked as directly as can be with the purpose of what we call UNRRA — a short name for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

What Can New Zealand Do?

Now, to conclude these remarks on a subject that could not be treated adequately in any talk, perhaps we can refer again to the bearing of all this on New Zealand. What, after all, is, or should be, our interest in UNRRA? The answer, may I suggest, is first that we have a common interest with people everywhere in preventing suffering, sickness, and death. Further, have not we

in New Zealand, farmers not the least, but all of us for that matter, a real interest as producers and exporters in seeing that markets are found for our so abundant produce? In the short run only this will mean relief, but even more important are rehabilitation and reconstruction—helping the war's victims to help themselves; and anxiety to emphasise this and to preserve their own self-respect was one of the most impressive points in the attitude of all Governments in their recent discussions. Then as the world recovers from the war it will not be a case of sending relief or charity to this country or that, but we may help by sending our produce in exchange for things which they can make, and which we in New Zealand can very well use.

Is it not very clear that making a success of these tasks that will face us just after the war is itself a part of and inseparable from the whole war effort? There is nobody who is not impressed by New Zealand's part in the war during more than four years, nor can we doubt that in the constructive tasks of peace in the relief period, and in the longer period, our co-operation can hardly be less. Certainly it will be wanted.



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