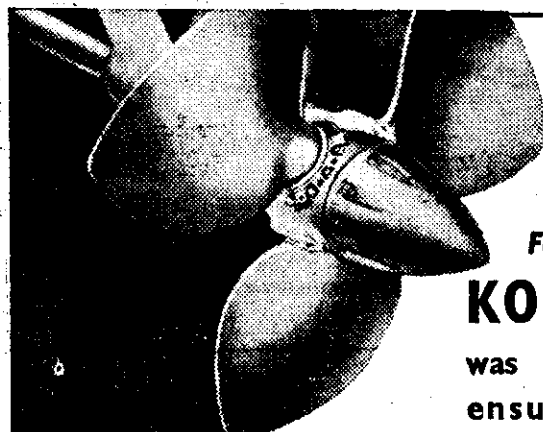




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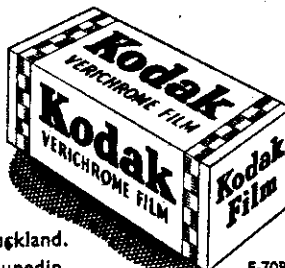
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N.Z. RELIEF TEAMS FOR GREECE

An Explanation of Why They Haven't Gone Yet But Will Be Going Soon

"THE LISTENER" is not interested in the pros and cons of the argument which seems to have developed, or to be developing, between the National Patriotic Fund Board and CORSO (Council of Organisations for Relief Service Overseas), but we are interested in the subject-matter of the argument—that is, the proposal to send New Zealand relief teams to work with UNRRA in Greece. One of the reasons perhaps why UNRRA has not yet come fully alive in this country, why it still seems something remote and impersonal, is because we have not yet had any of our own men and women in volunteer relief teams overseas, sending us back word of what they are doing and what needs to be done (though some New Zealanders are, of course, in paid administrative positions with UNRRA). So we went to C. G. White, vice-chairman of CORSO, and chairman of the N.Z. Red Cross Society, to ask him about the situation.

* * *

"THE report in the papers about the action of the Patriotic Council delegates in having turned down CORSO's request for funds to send relief teams to Greece almost suggested that CORSO has no official standing," we began. "So perhaps our first question had better refer to that."

"Well, it needs to be remembered that CORSO was not set up of its own volition," said Mr. White, "but came into being at the request of the Government, which is the agent for UNRRA in this country. CORSO comprises practically all the humanitarian organisations in the Dominion—22 in all. I won't name them all; but to give you just a few, there's the Lady Galway Guild, the Red Cross Society, the National Council of Women, the Y.M.C.A., the National Council of Churches, and the National Patriotic Fund Board itself. So its credentials are obviously good. In addition, the chairman of CORSO is Mr. J. H. Boyes, the Public Service Commissioner, who was nominated by the Government for the position."

Keeping Relief Human

"What specific jobs is CORSO intended to do?"

"Its main purpose, like that of similar organisations in other countries, is to prevent UNRRA from becoming an affair of governments only. It keeps world relief and rehabilitation, despite the gigantic scale on which it must be performed, still human; still direct, and person to person. Specifically, it helps New Zealand, by giving publicity to UNRRA, to carry out its obligations to distressed peoples; it co-ordinates the help which separate organisations and individuals want to give towards overseas relief; it seeks volunteers for relief service, selects

and classifies them, and gets them ready for the job; and similarly it helps with collection of goods to send abroad."

"Perhaps it shouldn't be necessary to ask this question, but has CORSO been in effective operation so far?"

"Yes, the organisations working under CORSO have already collected and sent many tons of clothing specifically to Greece; they were also very actively engaged in the recent big UNRRA clothes drive which, according to official reports, was such an outstanding success in New Zealand; and in addition CORSO has carried out a number of other collections of special items, such as buttons, wool, fats, and toys. But of course, the main job has been arranging the personnel for relief teams. . . ."

Too Late for Italy

"You mean the present teams wanted for Greece?"

"Well, in the first place UNRRA said it would welcome N.Z. teams for Greece, but we couldn't get them away at that time. Then teams were wanted for Italy, but again they could not be supplied in time, and the opportunity has passed. But Greece is still in desperate need; both the Greeks themselves as well as UNRRA have invited N.Z. to send teams, and this time they will be going. And they will need to leave soon if they are to arrive in time to do most good; that is, before the winter really sets in."

"We don't want to get involved in the argument, but there's this question of paying wages to team-members. Is that usual?"

"Yes, the principle of payment is exactly the same as has been followed for teams from Britain and Australia. . . ."

"Have those countries sent voluntary teams to assist UNRRA?"

The Question of Wages

"Certainly. In fact, I think I'm right in saying that New Zealand is now the only principal member of the British Commonwealth not yet represented in this way in the field. And in all cases it has been a recognised principle that payment should be made to the workers. The trouble is that there seems to be some confusion over the word 'volunteer.' But a volunteer is not a person who is unpaid; the distinction is rather with those administrative officers who are officially selected by UNRRA, attached to UNRRA's own staff—and often paid high salaries. The men and women who are going overseas from CORSO won't be highly paid—not by any means. But they are experts—medical people, sanitation specialists, people with experience of transport, welfare work, and so on; all very carefully chosen. And many of them are married, or have dependants. We must provide allowances for those dependants; we must arrange to meet their

(continued on next page)