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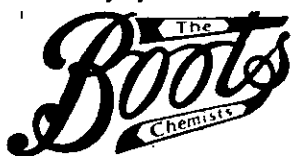
"The Niagara Secret," to Niagara School of Music, 53 Robertson Street, Invercargill. 5.5

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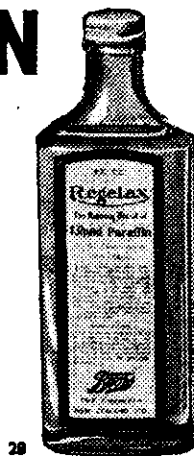
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## Speeding Supplies for UNRRA

**T**HIRTY minutes between breakfast and the day's first conference were given to *The Listener* by G. S. Mason, a flying representative of UNRRA who was in Wellington last week. The allocation was generous, for Mr. Mason deals in speed. In the last six months he has sped over 50,000 miles of the globe, and his purpose on these journeys (including that to New Zealand) is to speed up supplies.

"Who gives quickly gives double" is a vast understatement in UNRRA's work," said Mr. Mason. "One ton of wheat this winter may mean life for hundreds in places where 20 tons next summer might find perhaps no purpose whatever to serve—except as something like ballast. In any case, UNRRA's work will be wound up when 1946 ends in Europe; and even in China it won't run much longer. The world will not be rebuilt and rehabilitated by then, of course, but that is not UNRRA's job, thank heaven. Just the first 2 per cent of effort to start moving the wheels of local production is our job. The United States' first contribution to UNRRA—1,500,000,000 dollars—looks a mighty big sum. But it would not have kept the U.S. war-effort running for a week. Most belligerent countries were using approximately half their national income on the war. UNRRA takes 1 per cent of it."

"And what percentage of your own brief time, Mr. Mason, have you been able to give to New Zealand?"

"Well, I'm here for four days. But I didn't know when I allocated them that two of those days would be holidays—I mean Saturday and Sunday."

"So you disapprove of our long week-ends?"

### Productivity Brings Problems

"Not at all. Increased leisure is one of the things that a higher standard of living means; provided always that you keep producing as much as before in your shorter hours so that you don't pay for more leisure by fewer goods. Look at the U.S.A. Their productivity has become so enormous that they are going to have a straight choice in the next few months and years between working for nothing for the rest of the world (which cannot afford fully to pay them for their products) or working less."

"Neither will suit the Americans, will it—I mean, neither exporting their surplus goods for next to nothing nor learning how to loaf?"

"You are right. But a lot of people beside the Americans will have to learn a mighty lot, and learn it quickly, in these next years. At the moment, of course, every country—not only the States—is talking about exports. Nobody wants to import a darn thing if they can get out of it. However, my experience is that when governments make up their minds to work a fact-based policy, and take the people into their confidence on the why and how of it, nations quickly learn to face realities very cheerfully and to turn them to good account."

### The Housewives Helped

"You are thinking of your experience in rebuilding devastated countries, Mr. Mason."

"No, I am thinking of my work with the Canadian Wartime Prices and Trade Board before I joined UNRRA (I was Assistant to the Controller of Supplies). Canada got through her wartime difficulties remarkably well, and probably the main single reason for it was that right at the start the Board set up two-way communication between itself and all the housewives of the Dominion. Every women's organisation of every sort appointed a consumer representative to hand out to its members the how and why of price regulations, or food controls and so on which they regularly



G. S. MASON  
He specialises in speed

sent to her, and she on her side was supposed to pass on to the Government her members' complaints and suggestions. It worked. Closer contacts than hitherto between ordinary people and 'the government' are, to my mind, essential to democracy in this pretty complicated, large-scale world."

It was interesting, we suggested, to find a Canadian among the higher officials of UNRRA since so many people were inclined to think of it as run by and for Americans.

"Well, the fellow who pays the piper calls the tune. But UNRRA staff are by no means all Americans. Think of General Morgan, for example. Anyhow, I am not a Canadian but English. I was born in England and studied at Oxford, where you learn a lot in the proper English way of rubbing shoulders and being given plenty of time and encouragement to browse. Then, curiously, I got to Canada through taking my law degree at Edinburgh and becoming a Writer to His Majesty's Signet, if you know what that means. Many Scottish law firms, by their national mixture of enterprise with dependability, have financial fingers over the Atlantic. They passed me on to the Bank of Canada, then to the Foreign Exchange Board and so, ultimately, here to Wellington."

"It's a small world, Mr. Mason."

"I'll say it is. I've been in Australia, Britain, Egypt, South Africa, India, Southern Rhodesia, Iran and Iraq, all in these last six months—and in a train just once."