

*Notes Novelty Review January 1944*

# Mervin Rothschild Sees China An Active Postwar Field

According to Mervin S. Rothschild, for thirteen years manager of the huge Venida plants in Cheefoo and Shanghai, China, a big postwar field will be opened with China.

Interviewed in the offices of Norvin Rieser, president of the Rieser company, Mr. Rothschild and Mr. Rieser both agreed on the one vital subject that China will provide "unlimited" opportunities for American business men in the postwar period.

Mr. Rothschild was one of the 2000 repatriates returned to their homeland on the Swedish liner Gripsholm on December 2. He was interned in a concentration camp for nearly seven months at Pootung, across the river from Shanghai. He employed over 200,000 Chinese girls and women in the manufacture of hairnets alone during the many years he represented the Venida firm. Long before our country was actually at war with Japan, this government took over the American business plants in Occupied China. After Pearl Harbor of course, the plants were all shut down and many Chinese employees who were being paid at the rate of once a month found themselves hungry and penniless and without wages. Mr. Rothschild, in order to forestall any more suffering among these peoples, made several trips up the river and smuggled money in suitcases and bundles to pay off all their Chinese help.

He told us "that the Americans retain the highest esteem in the eyes of the Chinese, even more so than our allies the British." He also asserted that "the Chinese would completely replace the Japanese trade. Everything that the Japs ever made the Chinese can make better. In addition they are more honest and when they execute a sample you may be sure that they will deliver it that way."

American business men interested in entering China in the postwar period should note that the Chinese are principally concerned with reputation and integrity and that "a good name is money in the bank," he added. Whatever the immediate financial standing of a trader, he said, the Chinese are concerned chiefly with his



Kate Smith welcomes home Mervin Rothschild, Far Eastern representative of the Venida Hairnet Company, during her coast to coast radio program. Rothschild came home on the Gripsholm exchange ship after spending six months in a Japanese internment camp, and he described his experience in the Orient over the Kate Smith program.

all-around position and value of his product. The Chinese still use the Compradore system . . . which is a little like our own factors, here in the United States. A Compradore, sometimes will finance a foreign busi-

ness man in addition to being in complete charge of the management of plant and employees. He takes a small percentage of the net profits for his activities.

Mr. Rothschild and Mr. Rieser both agreed that we would be able to resume our business in China just as soon as the Japs are pushed out of the province of Shantung (just north of Shanghai). The manufacture of hairnets and other "hand labor" can be started almost immediately the Japs retreat. Handkerchiefs, linens, tapestries and embroideries will of course necessitate a longer wait, because the materials will have to be shipped to them from America, Ireland, Switzerland, etc. China had already installed much in the way of machinery before the war, but it will take some time before she can get started in the manufacture of machine-made articles.

"While the wartime established industrial plants of China and the general development of its economy which will follow in the postwar period might be considered by some to hold an actual threat for American traders, actually the reverse is true," Mr. Rothschild concluded.

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**MERVIN ROTHSCHILD**, Far Eastern representative of the Venida Hairnet Company, who recently returned to this country on the Gripsholm after spending six months in a Japanese internment camp, described his experiences in the Orient on the Kate Smith program. This picture of Rothschild and Kate Smith was taken during the program.