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## Commonwealth Society Essay.

How the Development of Air Transport  
has affected the Commonwealth.

It was a wonderful golden sunny Auckland day - the kind of day on which poets write their best works. But I was as far removed from poets and poetry as it is possible to be. To be honest about it, I was admiring the shapely legs of one of the most attractive air hostesses I have ever seen (and I've seen a good many!) as I relaxed in the modern comfort of Whenuapai Airport.

But let me introduce myself. I am Maxwell Rosenberg head of the New Zealand branch of a large insurance company. I was returning from a company conference in Vancouver and having reached Whenuapai I had to wait for my Viscount connection to



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Wellington. Apparently the 'planes were having trouble with the wind at Wellington airport.

While I was waiting at the airport terminal, having nothing else to do, I began to think how the development of air transport has affected Commonwealth. We stand and fall with Britain - she is the link that binds all Commonwealth countries together, but air travel has strengthened that bond as not much else could do. It is now just as quick, much quicker really, for us to visit Sydney by air as it is to visit Auckland by car, so why shouldn't we visit Sydney? If, like me, you are returning from Canada, it takes less than two days. All the the countries of the Commonwealth even little Ghana in the outbacks of Africa, are linked more closely to one another now than they were



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when the Wright brothers first began experimenting with their famous "Kite." Because it is so quick (and comparatively inexpensive) to travel to any Commonwealth country, the different nationalities cannot help but understand each other better. When a New Zealander decides to visit—say—Canada, unless he is entirely uninterested in people, he must leave with a deeper understanding of the people, their trials and troubles, beliefs and ideas. Now, more New Zealanders are visiting Canada (and other Commonwealth countries) than ever before, so it stands to reason that a larger percentage of people have a deeper knowledge of other countries. And as the people of other countries get to know one another better, they will naturally want to exchange trade, customs and ideas. For example, my firm



originated in Canada; it now has branches throughout Australia and New Zealand.

In wartime air transport brings us closer to Britain than we get by sea travel. Our men are waiting: she has but to call and many hundreds of them can be there within several weeks.

This line of thought led me the question of trade; a very important aspect of the life of any country. Many perishable goods are taken from countries separated by hundreds of miles from Great Britain, arriving just as fresh as when they left that country.

The other day my secretary posted a bunch of letters to all our branches. Among that bunch was a letter to Head Office in Vancouver. It went "par avion" by airmail. That letter has probably reached Canada by now, and a reply may be in the post. But for air travel



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that letter would have taken approximately two weeks to reach its destination, another two for the reply to come back. Four weeks! Not only my business but the the whole business world, and many other things besides, would be slowed down. I know my fourteen year old daughter would receive much less correspondence from overseas penfriends than she does!

In all parts of the Commonwealth, especially in remote islands such as the Chathams, air transport has proved invaluable in transporting critically ill people to the nearest place where they can receive proper medical care.

Pacific Islanders are flown to New Zealand to receive specialized treatment they could not get on their own island.

A newspaper heading reminded me of something just



as important. Recently Mr. Nash returned from a Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London. These conferences could not be held nearly so often if it took the Prime Ministers weeks to get there. If it had taken me four weeks to travel to my conference in Canada I would have been wasting the firm's time and money.

Also Queen Elizabeth II, at various stages in her life, has visited most Commonwealth countries, travelling extensively and meeting as many of her subjects as she can in the short space of time she has in the country. If she had to travel everywhere by car she would have had an extremely limited range indeed. She may travel to a country by ship but all intergal travelling is done by air. In this way she becomes more real to her subjects,



someone human, not just a person remote from every one else, belonging to the English people only. When one has seen Her Majesty she becomes someone we know, we've seen, and she belongs to us just as much as the British people.

From kings and queens I fell to tourists and immigrants.

Tourists abound in any country and their main object is, naturally, to see as much as possible. With air travel it is easier for them to reach the Southern claps or some of the beautiful islands round our coast.

Not so long ago a large number of school teachers had to be flown out from Britain to New Zealand, to be in time for the new term. Many classes would be teacherless if it had not been for air travel getting the teachers here on time. Children from the Pacific Islands and other such places come to



boarding school in New Zealand. If it took a week for the children to get home, their holidays would not be worth having. So think what a boon air transport is to these families, separated, yet united, by air.

Yes, air travel is a definite advantage and has aided the Commonwealth by uniting it, drawing the many different countries closer together in all respects. Many things would not be the same - I would not be where I am now - if the Wright brothers had not "planted the seed" which was to grow into a beautiful silver plant, with their contraptions in the early part of the century.

Oh, one last thing. Auckland would not have had her All Blacks back from their tour of a Commonwealth country, to retain the Ranfurly Shield against Wellington's



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challenge.

You see, the development of  
air travel has affected every  
aspect of Commonwealth life.