

Italy Free-Zones Some Ports

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ROME ... (UP) ... Fascist Italy is seeking to become a world shipping market where goods from every country could be sent in transit, stored, finished and reshipped to foreign destinations duty free.

Italy is gifted to play such a role be-

cause of her fine geographical location and because of the excellent facilities which her natural harbors give her.

Her Adriatic ports could be handsomely utilized as gates to Central Europe and the Balkans, her southern ports as transit points between the Orient and the Occident and her ports on the northwest coast as access to northern Europe.

Such a rich prospect has been envisioned by the government for many years. It is because of such a likelihood that a decree-law was passed in 1927 creating free zones in 14 of Italy's major ports. It is only recently, however, that new stimulus was given to the idea.

Because of the huge expense involved to set aside these free zones, Italy until recently hesitated to go ahead because of a feeling of doubt as to the success of the plan. The signing and renewal of many trade accords in the interval since the Ethiopian conflict, however, has changed this doubt to confidence.

According to the 1927 decree, duty free zones would be set aside in Genoa, Leghorn, Naples, Palermo, Trapani, Syracuse, Brindisi, Bari, Barletta, Ancona, Venice, Trieste, Fiume and Zara.

The last three ports have had free zones on a limited basis for a number of years to serve Austria, Jugoslavia and Hungary. With the realization of the Anschluss, Italy has signed a new accord with Germany reportedly assuring Trieste's future as a free zone port. Albania has special port facilities at Bari which is tantamount to a free zone.

The principal motivating the creation of the free zone is not alone to set aside areas where goods can be landed, stored and reshipped without the payment of any duty, but to give impetus to a new and profitable industry—that of finishing non-Italian material on Italian territory by Italian labor.

It is recalled that Italy has already approached Brazil, attempting to convince the South American republic to ship all her coffee for European and Mediterranean consumers to Trieste, unfinished and in bulk. According to the proposition, Brazil could store, sort and pack her coffee in the allotted free zone and reship it to the various points of destination.

Only recently Italy, in her trade negotiations with South Africa, similarly offered to set aside a free zone in Genoa where the Boer nation could send her frozen meats and fruits for storage, sorting and reshipment to the Continent. Italy has also approached Switzerland, offering the landlocked Federation the use of Genoa as an outlet to the sea.

It is thus evident that Italy has offered similar facilities and advantages to

many other nations.

Aside from the great prestige that Italy would certainly gain as an international centre of exchange, there are six other sound reasons prompting Fascists to create these zones. They are:

1. *Use of Italian Labor*—Thousands of Italians would be employed as longshoremen, storehouse workers and clerks, laborers in the factories to finish and sort the goods and as train loaders. This would be an outlet for some of Italy's unemployed and part-time workers.

2. *Use of Italian Equipment*—Italian ships would certainly carry additional traffic to and from these zones. Italian harbor equipment and harbor boats would also be used to load and unload the material to and from the ships. Italian trains would naturally get a great bulk of the traffic destined for many points on the Continent.

3. *Defray Harbor Upkeep*—Each of the Italian ports mentioned has a certain amount of overhead to pay for the cost of operation. Additional traffic to these ports would help pay these operating expenses and in several cases put the ports on a paying basis.

4. *Stimulate Banking Activity*—Italian banks with branches abroad would naturally be asked to handle some of the banking activities for those firms doing business through the free zones.

5. *Stimulate the Creation of Foreign Firms in Italy*—Many of the firms doing business through the zones would find it convenient to open branch offices in the Italian ports.

6. *Introduce Foreign Money to Italy*—The opening of foreign branches in Italian cities, banking activity caused by the business exchanges and the coming of foreign merchants to Italy would bring foreign money into Italy. The presence of foreign merchants and their families would bring in still more additional cash to the sorely tried Fascist coffers.

Men Worth . . .

(continued from page 12)

probably the most complete library of its kind anywhere, consisting, as it does, every scrap of printed matter and information on the subject that Keeler could get his hands on. He files everything away (he tells us he has the JOURNAL complete for the past five years), and controls the material with a card-index system. But he says that if he ever publishes some of his stuff he will have to leave town.

ARMAND (BERT) POULIN

"Why don't you write about somebody else, who is more important than I am?" was Bert Poulin's reaction, when we approached him for his story for this series. The query emphasized this young man's modesty, but his point was not well taken. In the first place, this page does not con-



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