

# Young Men Worth Knowing



RALPH KEELER

One way to prepare yourself for a position on the staff of an important daily newspaper is to take a course in metallurgy, at the Colorado School of Mines, and receive a degree in Metallurgical Engineering. This system is also recommended for anyone desiring a position as editor of a magazine. At least, the procedure worked out very well for Ralph Keeler, Mining Editor of the Manila Daily Bulletin, Editor of the Baguio Bulletin, Editor of the Marsman Magazine, and Philippine correspondent for some eight or ten mining publications all over the world.

Of course Ralph really intended to be a metallurgist when he graduated from the

Philips Exeter Academy back in 1927, and matriculated at the Colorado School of Mines. In fact, he held to this course in spite of considerable parental objection; Keeler, senior was a Yale man, and Ralph himself took the entrance examinations for Yale, and duly enrolled. He is still enrolled, but that is far as he went with it. After that, metals—how to dig them out of the earth's crust and how to separate them efficiently and cheaply—lured him to Colorado, where they teach you how it is done.

They taught him a lot about mining and metallurgy in four years at Colorado, but they didn't have any suggestions to make about getting a job, when he graduated with the class of 1931. That was a black year for miners; out of a graduating class of 75, only about 7 got jobs. And they were jobs, too, not positions. None of them had the remotest connection with mining—filling station jobs and the like. Ralph wrote about 300 letters to companies big and little which he suspected might need a good metallurgist, shift boss, mucker, slag piker, janitor, or roustabout. He guesses the letters are still filed away; anyway he has never had a reply to any of them.

Alma mater stepped in at this point to solve the economic crisis. The School of Mines needed someone to take over the job of assistant director of publications. Colorado publishes a number of technical mining journals and alumni publications, and Keeler accepted the position (it carried Faculty ranking) with a glad heart. You see, it was not just a job. It not

only gave Ralph something to use for money, but it also provided the practical encouragement Ralph needed to put the important question to the young lady who is now Mrs. (Jane) Keeler. Further than that, that first experience in journalism permanently changed the course of Ralph's life. He hasn't worked in or about a mine since.

Yes, all in all, it was a good job. There was just one thing wrong with it: it didn't last long enough. Along about 1933, after Keeler had been assistant publications man for about a year and a half, the University authorities decided they had to curtail expenses, and one way to accomplish this was to abolish (permanently) Ralph's job. Denver, Colorado, was the next stop, and a job as police reporter and mining editor on the "Rocky Mountain News" (Scripps-Howard).

Meanwhile, Roy C. Bennett, editor of the Bulletin had decided that the mining industry then burgeoning was going to amount to something and the paper ought to have somebody who knew mining and had had newspaper experience to handle it. This was in 1933 when the first boom came along and Mr. Bennett wrote to the Colorado School of Mines outlining his requirements and asking for suggestions. They put him in touch with Ralph. In late 1933 after considerable correspondence on the subject, Bennett went to the States on one of his infrequent vacations, and interviewed Ralph in Texas. The upshot of the whole thing was that the Bulletin got a mining editor, and Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Keeler arrived in Manila.

Ralph had his own job to make on the Bulletin. He stayed in Baguio for two years, (where he started the Baguio Bulletin—weekly mining supplement), not coming to Manila until 1936, when it became apparent that Manila, and not Baguio was to be the center of the mining industry of the Philippines. Marsman and Company approached him about that time with the idea of a house magazine, and Ralph took on the job of creating and editing the Marsman Magazine, a job which he still holds. So far as is known, this publication is the only one of its kind in existence.

Mr. and Mrs. Keeler like it here; Ralph is convinced that the mining industry is now firmly established as one of the most important in the Islands; and they plan to stay indefinitely. Two youngsters have come along, Hayes, 5, (named after a grandfather), and Marcia Jane, 18 months.

One thing of which Ralph is particularly proud is his extensive library on Philippine mining and mining companies. It is

(Please turn to page 38)

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## THE NATIONAL CITY BANK OF NEW YORK

# Italy Free-Zones Some Ports

By JOSEPH D. RAVOTTO  
United Press Staff Correspondent

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, containing, 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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cern itself exclusively with men who can be considered "important", whatever that word means. We introduce, rather, young men who are active in the business and professional life of this community; who "get about"; who intend to remain here permanently—in short, young men who will some day be the mainstays of this city. The men we write about are young men who have led and are leading active lives of usefulness. Their present "importance" is of no consequence. Furthermore, Bert cannot deny that anyone who has immediate supervision over the construction of a \$1,000,000 building as he has, is in a position of some responsibility.

As his name indicates, Bert Poulin is of French ancestry. His parents are second-generation Americans, living in Massachusetts, where his father owned several supply stores. Naturally, the boy put in his time in the stores after school and during summer vacations, from the day he was old enough to make himself useful. In this way he acquired two things which have never left him: a love of the business of merchandising, and the habit of hard work.

At 17, Bert decided that he was old enough to strike out for himself. He did so, and his life for many years after that was a succession of merchandising jobs, with night-school and special college courses sandwiched in whenever possible. Two of these jobs stand out in his memory today: a job as a salesman in a high-pressure New York shoe store, and (his most lucrative) a job as manager of a chain of radio stores.

Bert had had experience in selling shoes before he took on the New York job, and thought he was pretty good at it. But he was totally unprepared for shoe selling, New York high-pressure style. They gave him a quota of something like thirty pairs of shoes a day. Other salesmen told him the quota was a cinch—they always knocked out at least 60 pairs during an off day. Poulin had almost worked up to the quota when, some weeks later, they transferred him to another store and gave him a higher quota. Here he worked his head off—he talked shoes to his customers with the fervor of an evangel selling the idea of the better life to the town drunk—and eventually got to where he could make his quota. Meanwhile, salesmen next to him were getting rid of over 100 pairs of shoes a day, plus a respectable amount of shoe-polish, shoestrings, shoe-trees, bags, etc. He says he has never seen anything like it.

These high-pressure men form a unique group in the shoe trade. They know just exactly how it is done. The secret of their technique is never to waste too much time on a customer. After a minute or two of sales patter, your 100-pairs-a-day salesman will turn over a customer to an individual known in the trade (just why, we

don't know) as the "T-O man". This man is a sort of super-super salesman, who could sell a pair of patent-leather dancing shoes to Frank Buck, just starting out to bring something back alive. Meanwhile, the fast salesman turns his attention to some less recalcitrant customer. Another thing which contributes to these boys' success—they know their stock, and they always produce a perfect fit at their first attempt. They earn around \$200 a week apiece for themselves, and much, much more than that for the store.

Good a-pair-every-five-minutes men are known in the trade, and have no difficulty in picking up jobs wherever they may be. They are, as a result, an independent lot, and follow the seasons as regularly as the most fashionable socialite. Summer in New York, winter in Palm Beach or Hollywood, or even Nassau. The chain Poulin worked for got around this by having branches in Miami, to which they sent their crack men during the winter.

The radio job was better. Bert made a lot of money on it during the very worst of the depression, but he had to work so hard that he didn't have a chance to spend any of his money. At the peak of his earnings, he still lived in a YMCA, simply because he hadn't had time to think about moving. Once things looked pretty bad, though. He bought 40 *carloads* of a well-known brand of radios (over a period of time) at a special price of around \$21 per radio. The head of the organization was in Europe at the time, and when he heard about the purchase, he called Poulin just

two words—"you're fired". Bert cabled back, "o.k., but let me sell off these radios before you fire me". The radios sold all right, the whole lot of them, at \$49.50 apiece. Nothing more was said about firing anyone.

But the whole thing soon began to drain Poulin's health. Too much responsibility and too much work. In 1933 or thereabouts he called it a day and took an ocean trip. When he got back, he started looking for a "position". After several months he had gotten down to a job, at \$21 a week, and no takers. A year or so of this and that, and he began to think about opportunities in foreign lands; there didn't seem to be any left in the United States. He joined the Army, and came out there in 1935. After a year or so he brought himself out, and went to work for Heacocks.

At Heacocks he was, for a time, manager of the photographic department, and then manager of the retail store during the temporary absence of Mr. Gunn. Now he is, somewhat vaguely, Assistant to the President (Mr. Samuel F. Gaches) and is more or less in charge of the construction of the new H. E. Heacock & Co. building now rising on the site of the old earthquake-destroyed building on the Escolta. The project is his pride and joy. He will hold forth at length to anyone who will listen on such problems as: the height that counters should rise from the floor, considering that Filipinos are short the amazing amount of electricity a big chandelier will consume; the length of space salespeople should have behind counter, etc., etc.

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