ITALY'S ULTRA- MODERN STEEL PLANT IN THE SOUTH....

Taranto!

Up from Italy's sleepy Southland—her Mezzogiorno where the tradition is agriculture and fishing—comes a vast throbbing voice: steel—steel for the growing Italian economy—steel for the industrialization of the Mezzogiorno—and steel for Mediterranean and Middle Eastern markets. Born of Italy's surging demand for steel as well as a major effort to erase the imbalance between the country's prosperous, industrialized North and the poverty of the South, Taranto stands as a monument to the foresight of the leaders of the Italian steel industry. The best engineering brains from Italy, the United States, Austria, Germany, and other countries have been brought together to create a steel plant that incorporates the latest in design and technology, the most advanced thinking in automation, and a highly efficient materials handling system.

The Taranto steel plant, which is designed for an eventual output of 7.0 million net tons of ingots per year, is possibly the largest industrial investment ever made in Italy and certainly the largest in the South—\$560 million. This investment is intended not only for added steel capacity but also to serve as a base for the industrial development of the Mezzogiorno with the anticipated erection of metalworking, engineering, and supply plants. Presently, steel markets are limited in the Mezzogiorno, and during the early years of operation, much of Taranto's output of flat products will be shipped north, and its welded linepipe to oil-producing countries.

The present-day Italian steel industry in general

is not richly endowed with local raw materials, and with the exception of limestone, Taranto is no different. But Taranto is graced with a deep-water port; so, with its own fleet of large bulk carriers, ore can be brought from such distant points as India, Canada, Africa, and South America and coal from West Virginia at delivery costs competitive with any European plant.

When one first comes upon the Taranto steel plant among the olive groves in the hot plains of southern Italy, it doesn't seem quite real. And even after a few days there it still seems incredible that such an ultramodern plant could have been built in an underdeveloped region. But there it is, and—thanks to the efforts of a devoted team of engineers—Taranto is pouring forth an ever increasing volume of coils, plates, and linepipe.

Taranto has not yet been operating a full year, and it would be unfair to judge its future by the successes and also by the problems encountered during these start-up months. In the following pages we shall endeavor to describe the many unique features of the plant, providing readers first with a background on the Italian steel industry. But this is not the whole story, and we would hope to be able to return to Taranto in a few years to report on its production accomplishments and on the influence that it has exerted on the building of a more stable and prosperous Italian economy.

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