Telling What ERP Does

— In 19 Member Countries

AN ITALIAN laborer in Milan walks into his local post office, purchases a stamp and pastes it on a letter addressed to his farmer son who is living in Australia. The stamp has a design depicting a twin motif of peace and better living, the standard of the European Recovery Program. Both sender and addressee notice the stamp and a small feeling of confidence comes over them.

"We have not been forgotten; there are better days ahead for all of us; America helps us so that we can help ourselves," is an approximation of the thought which father and son both feel though a distance of some 10,000 miles separates them.

In another part of the world, two Bavarian tradesmen are discussing conditions in their Alpine-encircled township. "Things are looking up," says one, eyeing the brisk business being done in the local shops.

"Remember what it was like one year ago?" asks the second.

"Prices are high, but at least the goods are here where we can buy them," adds the first man, glancing at his Munich newspaper. "The imports are rolling in, I see," he ventures. "Cotton from the United States, seeds and petroleum, vegetables and oil. It's all Marshall aid."

INCIDENTS SUCH as these can be multiplied in every one of the 19 countries taking part in this, the greatest experiment in economic cooperation ever undertaken in history.

The story of the Marshall Plan, its objectives and the progress being made toward their accomplishment, is being told to the people who are its immediate beneficiaries — through press, radio, pamphlet, poster, town-hall meeting — by their own governments in their own idiom.

The governments of the ERP countries on June 28-30 posted a combined exhibit at the Chateau de la Muette in Paris, designed to show graphically the extent to which the information programs have succeeded in reaching the rank and file in each individual country.

The exhibit was arranged by the information office of each country concerned, with mutual exchange of ideas on improving the Individual programs as its basic purpose. The economic ministers were invited to examine the booths at their convenience. Comment was highly favorable and wide interest shown in the contrasting techniques.

COMMON TO all of the information programs under general auspices of the OEEC Press Department is the concept that a sense of common effort and mutual aid must be nurtured through education and orientation. Therefore, the success of an information program can only be judged by its scope in reaching the grass-roots level.

The man-on-the-street, Mr. Average Icelander, Englishman, Irishman, German, Italian, Austrian — these are the people who must be made aware of

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US aid to the economic recovery of their country. It is not enough to publish broadsides in “highbrow” economic weeklies. It is vital, however, to the success of this mutual effort that the masses be made aware of its broad base and its great issues.

How is this purpose to be achieved? How best to overcome the counter-campaign of lies and vilification directed against the aid program on a continuing basis from the Cominform which regards ERP as an abomination? The answer is adequately given at the OEEC Press Exhibit in Paris. It is simply this: present the facts in simple, clearly-conceived language, hammer them home by constant repetition and through widely-circulated mass media.

Each of the information programs contains some feature which is characteristic and peculiar to the country which originates it, but all have certain features in common.

In Italy, the postal authorities cooperate by issuing a special postage stamp commemorating the first anniversary of ERP on April 3.

In Germany, the reserve side of the ration card was used to publish a message.*

In Eire, a series of weekly fireside chats were employed to reach the people to whom the radio is an integral part of home life.

In the United Kingdom, pamphlets are employed with telling effect.

In Austria, movie slides have been and continue to be shown in every cinema and theater, and spot news announcements report progress under the impact of Marshall Aid.

The French exploit the press for full, frank and well-balanced analyses and studies of the economic condition in that country.

Special groups such as labor are reached by servicing trade union publications and meetings with background material, photographs, graphs and charts on cooperation for recovery.

The town-hall meetings which are gaining such popularity in many parts of Europe do not need to be prodded to discuss economic problems which affect the lives of every man, woman and child, and no one can talk economics without considering ERP.

In THE Bizone great success was achieved with special visual exhibits posted at the Amerika Haeuser (US Information Centers) in the US Zone and Die Bruecke Haeuser (British Information Centers) in the British Zone. These were accompanied by special discussion groups to which come townspeople, farmers, businessmen, students and persons in every walk of life.

All of the participating countries make good use of posters, pamphlets, reprints, press, radio and publications in many spheres of activity. Newspaper editors have made a valuable contribution to the success of the program.

Information officers in some countries make the editors’ task easier by arranging special-events programs which dramatize the arrival of certain ERP shipments; by organizing press conferences when occasion calls for them; by inviting correspondents on tours of factories and plants using ERP materials; by briefing the working press corps on the complexities of the Marshall Aid program when this is necessary or making experts available for this purpose, and by other devices which are well known in public relations work.

In the Bizone a textbook for high school students in which the “ABC” of ERP will be explained is in preparation. An ERP fair is planned for this fall in Munich, and every Bizonal exposition has had an ERP display.

Several ERP countries have employed the comic book and newspaper cartoon to present simplified versions of the way in which ERP is speeding recovery and mutual trade. An Italian cartoon which was on exhibit in Paris explained the whys and wherefores of penicillin imports which had been financed by Marshall funds.

An effective graphic display in the British booth of the Paris exhibit showed how Marshall Plan gave the nation (a) time in which to get back its economic equilibrium; (b) dollars with which to underwrite the cost of essential imports from hard currency areas; (c) increased production by providing the necessary raw materials; (d) accelerated trade with world markets; (e) internal stability during the explosive postwar period of readjustment.

The enormous variety of projects which Marshall funds have made possible was projected photographically at the Paris exhibit: public works of land reclamation, irrigation and forest work on mountain basins; reactivation of damaged farms; experimental farming and training of peasants in the latest scientific methods; subsidies for the canning, processing and transforming of farm products, for the formation of small peasant holdings, for protection of crops, and hundreds of others equally important. The pictoramas told a story of cooperative effort and resultant industrial recovery which cannot fail to impress all who believe in freedom and recovery.

The publicity and education programs are being carried out under authority contained in the ECA agreements signed between the European Cooperation Administration and each participant country.

Article VIII of the ECA Agreement between the United States and British Zones of Germany, signed in July 1948 by the two Military Governors, calls for the widest possible dissemination of the facts concerning the progress of ERP in Germany “in order to develop the sense of common effort and mutual aid which are essential to the accomplishment of the objectives of the program.”

A similar provision appears in every agreement signed by the Economic Cooperation Administration and a Marshall Plan country which committed itself to take all “practicable steps to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided for such dissemination.”

Americans who are underwriting the heavy cost of the European Recovery Program can be satisfied that this portion of the agreement at least is being faithfully carried out. +END

Some Nazi Property Held

All properties of Nazi Party members have been released from control with the exception of those belonging to persons categorized primarily as Class I and II offenders and probationers. Control of these properties must continue, under present regulations, until a final decision has been rendered by the denazification courts or until the probationary period has expired.