

California's Contributions

There is a growing belief that the free food Americans sent to Italy proved a strong factor in the recent election and that food more than anything else convinced the Italians that our proffers of friendship and aid were not mere lip service. Unquestionably the flow of letters to friends and former acquaintances were of material assistance, but those large and small contributions of food and clothing left nothing to the imagination as to how the average American felt about Italy and her problems.

It is a source of satisfaction to be in position to credit our own contributions to the Italian cause as valuable. We not only helped load the Friendship Train with flour and other items of food; we loaded our Golden Bear with milk and sent her on a goodwill voyage that aroused the interest of the people of France, Italy and Greece. Ours was a contribution from the heart with a special message. We not only sent food, but a ship manned by our own boys to convey our gift.

Several letters have been received locally from the four cities in Europe where our food was received. These letters are frank testimonials to the kindly feelings they aroused and the deep appreciation of those helpless

children who were nourished. The Rotary Clubs of France and Italy, promoters of international goodwill, were loud in praise for this good deed and strong in commending the spirit which sent the food on its way.

As remarked in this column on a previous occasion the ship officers and cadets were American ambassadors whose sole thought was to bring a friendly greeting and a timely gift. We have conclusive proof that the mission we entrusted to the Golden Bear was carried out as intended and that these young Californians were capable and reliable messengers.

It will be much easier to help the Italians through the Marshall Plan as a consequence to these friendly deeds. We have given of our substance to tide suffering people over a rocky spot. They appreciate the thought behind this movement as well the nourishment provided.

There is no doubt that a strong naval force off the shores and our intercourse with government officials were strong factors in the results of that election, but back of these actions were expressions from individuals of a sincere friendship that has endured in spite of Mussolini and the great wrongs perpetrated in the name of Italy.