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Italians Preparing to Send U. S. Extradition Request for Sindona

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The New York Times
Michele Sindona

ROME, Feb. 17—A request by the Italian Government for the extradition of Michele Sindona, the financier who at one time was in control of the Franklin National Bank in New York, is expected to reach the United States this week.

Mr. Sindona, who is 53 years old and was born in Sicily, now lives with his family at the Hotel Pierre in New York.

A spokesman for the Justice Ministry here said today that Italy was preparing a formal demand for the financier's extradition and that the Foreign Ministry would forward it to Washington shortly.

The request is based on two arrest warrants against Mr. Sindona issued by Italian courts last autumn. He has been charged with fraudulent bankruptcy, falsification of books and related offenses.

Feels Extradition Unlikely

Mr. Sindona was quoted in an Italian magazine interview last week as having said in New York that United States authorities were unlikely to agree to an Italian extradition demand. He told Panorama magazine of Milan that such a request would be futile because "the charges leveled at me in Italy are without any basis."

Mr. Sindona's system of interlocking banks and companies, controlled by him from such tax havens as Luxembourg and Liechtenstein, was estimated to be worth \$450-million to \$500-million only a year ago. Since then, the Sindona empire has rapidly crumbled.

The Vatican said last month that a Roman Catholic Church institution based here had suffered "limited losses" in the

closing of two banks in Milan and Geneva that Mr. Sindona had controlled.

Sindona Repeats Denial

Mr. Sindona, reached by telephone today at the Hotel Pierre in New York, repeated his denials of any wrongdoing.

"The charges are completely untrue," he said. "I denounce people who are making these judgments against me."

When told that The New York Times was reporting that the Italian Government had requested his extradition, he said: "I don't think it is true." He said no one had informed him of the request. He referred all other inquiries to his New York lawyer, who could not be reached by telephone.