

Volkswagen Discussion Topic In Coming West German Election

Bonn, Germany — The hump-backed Volkswagen or "People's Car," which every German dreamed of owning in Hitler's day, is being kicked around again as a political football in Western Germany's 1957 election campaign.

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer announced last week that his party will run a bill through Parliament turning the vast ownership plant over to private ownership.

Shares in the \$199-million concern will be offered on the market at only \$11.90 apiece as an investment for millions of workers. Special registration will prevent big business from grabbing control.

Adenauer's opponents brand the project as a vote-catching maneuver four months before the September election. They point out that the Parliament and probably the supreme court must rule on ownership.

But, election stunt or not, Adenauer's project has caught the public fancy about this one-time Nazi white elephant which has become the chief symbol of West Germany's post-war economic recovery.

Volkswagen was the child of Hitler's "strength through joy" labor front. Germans were told they could have a small car for

the unheard of price of \$300 in which they could scuttle around the autobahns.

They paid on an installment plan in reverse—pay now get later. Tens of thousands were dazzled by the idea or railroaded into anteing up advance payments, some deducted from monthly pay packages.

In all, about 336,000 Germans put money into what turned out to be one of the largest scale confidence tricks in history. So far as is known, not a single investor ever took delivery of his car.

Gary Meredith Named To National Conference

Cave Junction — Gary Meredith, son of Mr. and Mrs. Orville Meredith of Cave Junction, has been chosen as one of two southern Oregon high school students to represent region 5 at the National Student Council conference in Roswell, N. M., this June.

Meredith, who won honors earlier this year on his Eagle Scout report to the national trip to Washington, D.C., was selected by the regional representative of the national council, after letters of recommendation were received from the Illinois Valley High school.

The money paid in advance was used in part to build the Volkswagen plant at Wolfsburg, but World War II intervened and the factory switched straight to turning out Jeep-like runabouts for the Nazi army.

Money Never Located

All told, the Nazis collected about \$90 million. The money supposedly was banked in "account No. 21,706" of a bank in what is now the Soviet sector of Berlin. The money has never been located. Even if it were, it would be almost valueless today because of wartime inflation and post-war currency reform.

Allied bombings reduced the plant to a shambles, but in 1947 British military authorities encouraged the Germans to get back into production.

The plant, only eight miles west of the Soviet zone border, had to be rebuilt from the ground. Today it is a vast layout employing some 25,000 persons. It is now turning out cars at a rate of more than 1,000 daily and the export model is now seen throughout the world.

Former investors fought for their money, demanding that every one who had paid his full share before the war should now get a car. But the Supreme Court tossed out their case in 1954.

Phoenix Grade School Slates Visitation Day

Phoenix — The Phoenix Grade school will hold a children's visiting day Friday, May 24, for all children who will be starting school in the first grade next fall.

Parents have been requested to bring children to school at 1 p.m. and pick them up at 2:30 p.m. Children will familiarize themselves with an actual school

1,225 Degrees Will Be Conferred at OSC

Corvallis — Approximately 1,225 degrees will be conferred by Oregon State college June 3 at its 8th commencement exercises. The total is 150 more than a year ago.

Thirty-five doctor's degrees will be conferred this year, 178 master's and about 1,040 bachelor's degrees.

Baccalaureate will be Sunday, June 2, with Robert M. Minto, chaplain at Stanford university chapel, as speaker. To provide maximum seating for parents, guests and the general public, both will be held in the coliseum. The commencement program will begin at 10 a.m. and baccalaureate at 11 a.m.

Insurance Company Says Business Shows Gains

Portland — Business activity in the 11 western states scored a moderate gain during the first quarter of 1957, according to "West in Review," quarterly business summary published by the western home office of Prudential Insurance company.

Seasonally adjusted index for the first quarter was 7.7 per cent above the corresponding period of last years and 1.7 per cent above the final quarter of 1956. Engineering and construction totaling nearly a billion dollars let effective support to the western business level, according to the report.

Births during the Mayflower's historic voyage in 1620 raised the total passenger list from 102 to 104.

MEETING CANCELED

Gold Hill — The Gold Hill VFW auxiliary has canceled the May 24 meeting, officers have announced. The next regular meeting of the auxiliary will be held Friday, June 14, at 8 p.m. in the IOOF building.

MEMBERSHIP SELECTION

Eugene — Michael R. DeVore, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. Ronald DeVore, 806 East Jackson st., Medford, was recently selected for membership in Druids, junior class representative and is in preteritry.

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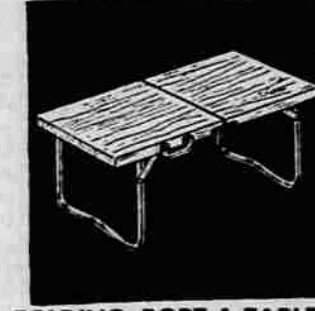
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