

Tiniest Republic Stakes Future on Gaming Table



WHEEL'S SPIN at San Marino casino produces mingled expressions on customers from over the Italian border.

SAN MARINO (NEA) — The world's oldest and tiniest republic is gambling on its future by taking its problems of dwindling revenues and rising costs to the gaming table.

Surrounded by non-Red Italy, the little communist-controlled nation of San Marino has started a gambling casino in the hope of making up the loss of customs duties which Italy normally collected and paid to the republic.

Protests
Over the protests of the Catholic party minority in this country of 12,000, a syndicate was authorized to convert the Titano theatre, named after the mountain on which sits the capital of San Marino. With roulette wheels and other games in full cry on the main floor and erstwhile stage, San Marino hopes its 50 per

cent cut of the take will make up its customs losses.

For a million lire (about \$1500) monthly, the syndicate rents the theatre. A blazing neon sign, "Kursaal," announces its presence—founding fathers frowned on the word casino in deference to the Christian democrats. Inside some 100 persons, chiefly San Marinenses who picked up their new trade at neighboring Italy's casinos at San Remo and Venice, operate the

games. For 500 lire (less than \$1) the visitor can come inside and try his luck.

New Casino
In return for its concession, the "Kursaal" operators have agreed to build a new casino valued at 100 million lire (about \$150,000), a new 150-room hotel for its clients, and to repair the two main roads leading from the capital to Italy, using San Marinense labor and local materials.

But the "Kursaal's" chief clients at the moment, the Italian industrialists and upper class, are finding obstacles at the Italian-San Marino frontier. There, finance police have established control points to check documents of travelers with an eye to tax returns. Each bus or car passing into the tiny republic is examined at a leisurely pace, because, casino operators claim, the Italians want to delay arrival at the gambling tables. All this, they charge, is an effort by rival casinos in Italy to kill their operation.

Natives Barred
If the rivals succeed in putting the new "Kursaal" out of business, the average San Marinense will have lost — but not through direct gambling. Natives are forbidden admittance to the games.

IOOFs Organizing Dance Club

A group of the Odd Fellow's lodge are organizing "Ye Olde Time Dance Club" with the first dance scheduled for Saturday, November 12, at the IOOF hall.

Those interested in becoming a member of the club are urged to attend the initial jig. Instruction will be given in square dancing and other old-time steps. Refreshments will be served.

Membership is open to members or non-members of the IOOF lodge.

EAGER BEAVER LUNCHEON
DURANGO, Colo. (P)—Busy beavers—the four-legged, flat-tailed kind—gave Mrs. Wallace Lombard a lift for her bridge party. For tally and place cards she used chips from aspen trees she'd found at a beaver dam near Electra lake.

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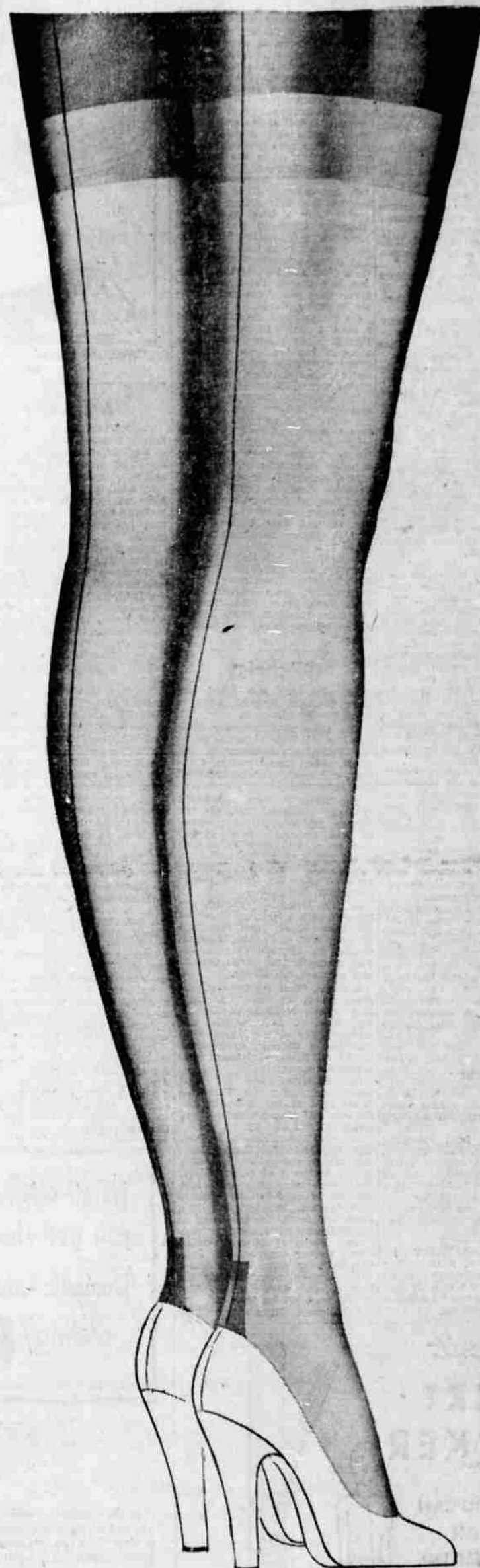
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