

# Monte Carlo Casino Biggest, Boldest Monopoly in World Pays Cost of Running Entire Little Country of Monaco

Rumor That Big Winner of Season Is a Canadian—Best of Brains Cannot Invent System to Beat Bank—Dress at Casino Not Extraordinary, But Jewels Are Amazing.

By LACEY AMY

THE Monte Carlo Casino is not Monaco officially. Except that in theory it must submit to Mopagasque laws, it is official in no sense. In reality it is as much a company as the Standard Oil, with a directorate and shareholders, a profit and loss account to face each year. But the poor, down-trodden Standard Oil is amenable to the laws of a great country that does not exist for its convenience, that is not dependent upon it for its existence financially; it is subject to the laws of a score of countries in which it operates.

The Casino pays a huge license fee to the coffers of Monaco, a fee that provides for the thirty-two soldiers and the hundred or two functionaries; for the prince and his entourage; for the prince's yacht that lies, like a decoy duck, in the harbor with cold engines; for the band concerts and dances on the quay, given free to the townspeople in the name of the prince. It takes the place of tariff for revenue, of income tax, of all taxes and rates—except what we visitors pay, of charity.

It is the modern fairy godmother acting nationally.

And for this it is granted an authority that makes one approach it with uncovered head, that softens voices even in the thick of the frequent arguments that arise in the gambling rooms, that enables it to charge us for the opportunity of taking our money. It admits whom it likes, takes away an entrance ticket without explanation or return of price, and settles disturbances with the high hand of a medieval king from whom there is no appeal.

Its international directorate ensures for it the deaf ear of the nations. And France, I am informed, permits no other roulette tables within its jurisdiction. Nothing must compete with the Monte Carlo Casino.

That's the Casino, the biggest monopoly in the world, the most autocratic institution in modern life.

But does its autocratic authority frighten away any of the hundreds of thousands who patronize it in a year? Not what you'd notice. Last month the tips were greater than ever before in its history. Last night I struggled in vain for half an hour to get a seat at a table, and scores were throwing on their mise from second back in the crowding rows. A woman sitting at the end stole three winnings, to my own knowledge, yet she got away with it despite the protests of the English losers.

## Casino Is Everything

THE Casino is much more than its gambling tables. It pays Monaco's bills, as I have said. But more than that, it is the drawing card that makes Monaco's business possible. Without the Casino Monte Carlo would be a small town struggling for the recognition of the winter visitor, with only its scenery and climate to offer; and Monaco would long ago have sunk into France and disappeared as an identity.

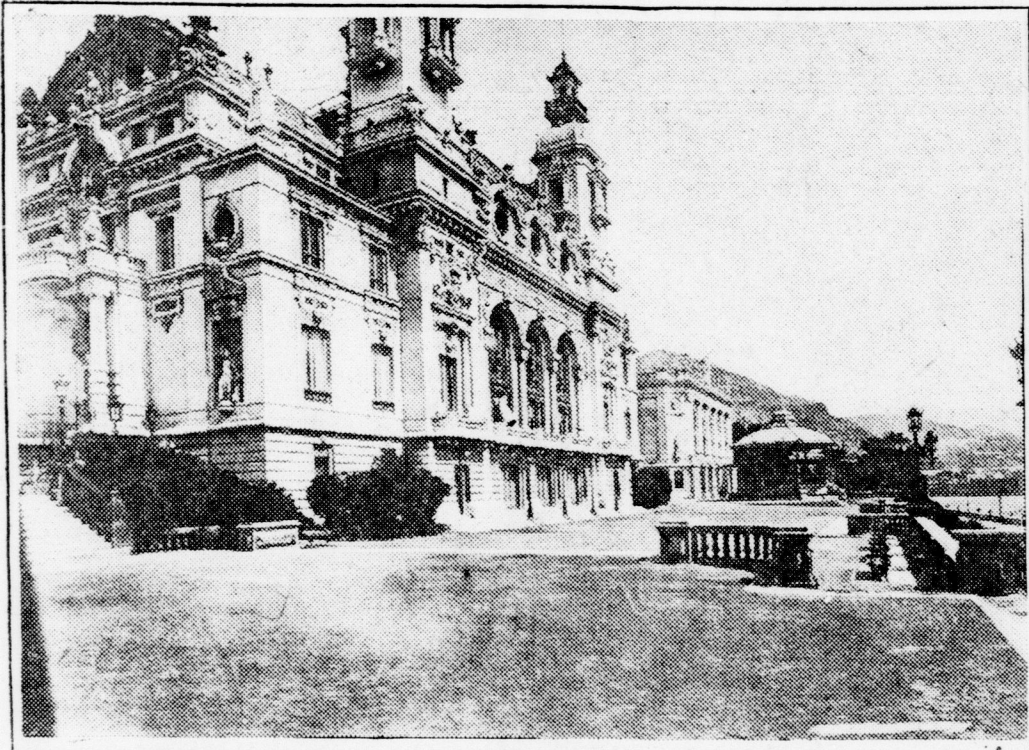
The Casino owns the Hotel de Paris and the Cafe de Paris, the two crowded tourist resorts that, with the Casino, circle one end of the famous gardens. It has laid out a few acres in gardens that have no rival—acres of varied palms, of flower beds, of streams and ponds and paths. It is responsible for the even more famous terraces, for the pigeon shooting ground that is almost as well known.

It owns the only two cinemas in Monte Carlo proper. Within the Casino building it runs a theatre where grand opera and concerts are given almost every day of the season, to which it brings all but the most expensive artists. It has tea rooms and bars and ball rooms. It maintains its own orchestra and chorus, its own reading and writing rooms, its own police and firemen.

Within its halls all local announcements are posted, the telegraphic news of the day, the current rate of exchange, the stock exchange quotations, the times of the trains and motors, the cards for all sports, the condition of golf at Mont Agel.

It is Monte Carlo. It is Monaco. It is, to a great extent, the Riviera. It is the world's gambling resort. In the winter season two-thirds of its patrons speak English better than French and many do not even know the numbers in French. Yet, strangely enough, there does not seem to be an employee in its pay who speaks fluent English. In the offices where the tickets are sold by a small army of clerks an Englishman is referred to a clerk whose mastery of English is inadequate for more than the barest information. The inspectors in the rooms who are nominally for the service of English speaking players understand only enough to take the side of the French in a dispute. And the croupiers and chiefs who handle the tables are forbidden to speak in any language but French, and are unable for the most part even to grasp English numbers.

The staff of the Casino is colossal. There are in the winter season six hundred croupiers alone, in addition to chefs, inspectors, servants, detec-



THE WORLD'S LARGEST GAMBLING HOUSE—THE CASINO, MONTE CARLO

tives, office staff, police, foremen, orchestra, chorus, gardeners, and so on. The expense of the organization must be enormous. Its head man was recently discovered to have robbed it of millions of francs. Yet it keeps on declaring the old dividends.

That's how much of a chance the gambler has of beating it.

## World's Only Sure Winner

THE cost of administration is not really so great as it might appear. The croupiers are paid a wage that is made adequate only through the cagnotte, or tips from the players. And even the half of all this is taken by the company. Once the tips went directly to the croupiers, but it led to abuse, and now the company provides a locked box, held by the chef of the table, and of its contents the croupiers receive only half.

How much this is may be estimated from the fact that the tips exceed the croupiers' wages—which means that the croupiers do not cost the Casino a penny.

The Casino is the only sure thing in life except death. It is the only stock company that can laugh at the world's cares and worries. If it failed to pay dividends there are a thousand fresh schemes for taking them from the public. And like lambs we who visit the Casino would pay—pay—pay.

There are many things for which to admire the Casino and its administration, apart from the entertainment it provides. It has a rule that citizens of Monte Carlo, making their living in the town, may not be admitted. That may be conscience or expediency—but it is hard on the intelligence of the eager visitor. Monte Carloites who wish to gamble must indulge themselves at the Beausoleil Casino.

Over everything within the rooms is thrown a veil of dignity that touches one's funny-bone. Every suggestion of rush or eagerness on the part of the players to secure early seats at the tables to bolt from table to table in the scattered game played by some is frowned on by frock-coated inspectors.

The rush of securing seats when the doors are opened at ten in the morning is broken by indignant, solemn, soft-voiced inspectors with the air of guarding the sanctity of a cathedral. And when an argument arises over the ownership of bets, the inspectors drop about the scene the pall of their dignity and, as a last resort, hustle the disputants into side rooms and close the door. What happens there I do not know.

A third virtue is that it has never refused to pay an uncontested loss. I say "uncontested," since there are constant misunderstandings cropping up between the players and the croupiers, though I acquit the croupiers, at least, of intentional dishonesty. The same cannot be said of the attendants at the paying-out counters whose reputation of calculated dishonesty is too well founded to be questioned.

## Many Tips to Give

IT would appear only reasonable that the Casino which sooner or later wins our money, should offer attractions to draw us to the tables. It does nothing of the kind. The little blue ticket that lets me through the carefully guarded door to the private rooms cost me two hundred and fifty francs for the season. For a month I would have paid seventy-five. The same amount would admit me for the season to the general rooms, thirty francs for one month, three francs for a day.

When I enter the lobbies I must pass across my hat and coat, and fifty centimes with it. When I make a winning at a table I probably drop something in the cagnotte box, though I may be deeply in loss already to the Casino that takes half of these tips. Attendants hang about to pull out my chair for a tip, or open the wash-room door, or do one of the hundred and one little things one prefers to do for himself.

Entrance to the Sporting Club, the innermost sanctuary, costs another fee, the qualifications for entrance here being membership in a reputable club, a banking account that can smile at high stakes, and the daring and physique to stand an all-night seance.

For all this it offers, in addition to the lure of the tables, an over-ornate building outside, oppressively fussy rooms within, where marble and granite, gilt and crystal, fight to crush the breath from the player, with Brobdingnagian paintings on the walls of the private rooms that could not be called art by the most biased friend. It maintains a temperature that wilts collars and trickles perspiration down every other face in the rooms, and a ventilation that makes one gasp.

There are those who insist that the temperance and bad air are Casino schemes to interfere with clear thought, but the reason given officially is that the whole world must be catered to. The Casino knows well that a player will suffocate, but never freeze.

The general room is an enormous hall containing eight roulette and two trente et quarante tables, with two side rooms—used in summer as the private rooms—providing five more tables for roulette. In the salons privies beyond, comprising four rooms, are six tables for roulette, three for trente et quarante and four for baccarat.

Roulette is by far the most popular game. It is easily understood, the plays are quicker, and the possible wins greater since an en plein win plays thirty-five times the mise.

Roulette probably requires little description here, except to say that it consists of a free wheel turning horizontally within a sloping enclosure, its circumference divided into thirty-seven spaces numbered from 0 to 36, each alternate space, with the exception of the zero, being red or black. Drawn on the table at each end of the wheel is a large rectangular design in which are marked the numbers in succession, in rows of three. The bets—disks previously purchased—are placed on this design at the desired place.

## Methods of Play

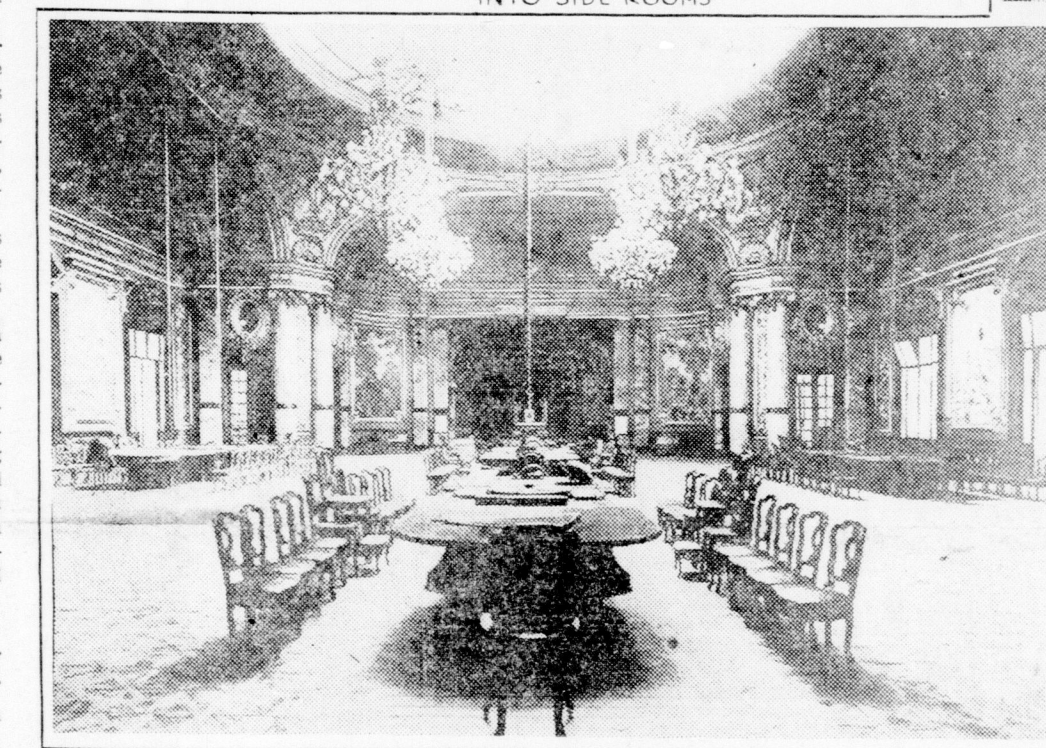
ONE may play on even chances—the red or the black, odd or even, first eighteen or last eighteen—on any of the three dozens, on columns, on a single number, or on two, three, four, or six, a different amount being paid for the winning of each, the winning number determined by the falling of the ball set rolling by the croupier about the sloping enclosure at the rim of the wheel.

In any play the advantage is distinctly with the bank. Though there are thirty-seven numbers—thirty-seven chances—one wins only thirty-five times the mise on a single number, seventeen times on two numbers joined by the mise, eleven times on three, eight times on four, five on six, and double on the dozens and columns. On the even chances one's bet, or mise wins only its own amount. When zero falls, the bank rakes in everything, but the bets on zero itself, with the exception that the simple chance bets are put in prison and only released if the next turn favors the bet, in which case nothing extra is paid.

Trente et quarante is played with cards and a marked table. A croupier or tailleur drops the cards in two rows, each to add above thirty, and the bets are paid according to the color that nearest approaches thirty. Some players will touch no other game, but the tables are com-



WHEN ARGUMENT ARISES THE INSPECTORS HUSTLE THE DISPUTANTS INTO SIDE ROOMS



INTERIOR OF THE MAGNIFICENT GAMBLING SALOON

paratively empty, except in the rush hours. It is said that the bank itself does not favor the game.

Baccara or chemin de fer is beyond my space to describe. It has a room to itself and usually deals with large amounts of money.

The basis for the betting is a white disk representing five francs, the minimum mise. In the private rooms the minimum was established in December at ten francs, with one table at twenty, a trente et quarante table at one hundred, and baccara ranging from fifteen to three hundred in its higher stakes.

The minimum does not prevent a player staking more, so long as a winning would not entitle him to a payment of more than six thousand francs. The reason for this limit I will explain in another article.

Play opens at ten in the morning and continues at some tables until midnight, at others until two in the morning, and in the Sporting Club sometimes as long as there are players. To the Casino every day is the same, Sunday, Good

Friday, Easter, even Christmas, the solitary exception being the birthday of a locally more famous man, the Prince of Monaco. On that day it used to remain closed all day, but the urge of modern finance has reduced the closed period to two hours, up till noon. The high cost of living, I suppose.

Probably four of every five players firmly or dimly believe that the Casino manipulates the tables to defeat the players—that they are tilted to a different angle each night, or the wheel is loaded, or the croupiers turn with the aim to make the greatest winnings for the bank. But all these fables are not worth discussing, even were they within the bounds of possibility. The bank needs no extra advantage.

Whether one considers the Casino a recreation or a vice depends upon one's luck, I fear. The former opinion seems to be favored. As the leading amusement of the Riviera, visitors are prepared to pay for it as they do for a play or for golf. Some have made a profession of it. They do not stop to diagnose; they are too busy on the profit and loss account.

Casino players may be divided by one method into the plungers who blithely or recklessly play the limit, and the little gambler who diffidently and hesitatingly risks his five francs. More descriptively they may be classified as those who count on blind chance and those who play a system.

No one has yet been able to decide with any authority which wins or loses the most.

The Casino believes in systems. Certainly. It encourages them, it permits figures to be taken every day at one table for publication in a weekly journal. It knows that some of the best brains in the world have set themselves to the solution of the means to break the bank, and have failed. It knows that the system player is the plunger who never gives in as long as he has money.

Systems are of so many kinds as to defy description. Some keep plugging at one number, or a series of numbers. But most systems are based on a delay in the turning up of a number, the gamble being that, after a certain delay, the law of chance will make it appear. With this the player starts what it called a progression. That is, he keeps on playing on the selected number or numbers until it appears, increasing his bet at a point that will ensure that a win will repay him all he has previously lost in that play.

On this system it would seem that a player with command of sufficient capital and patience would sooner or later win, for the number would be certain to turn up eventually. But that is where the bank establishes a rule that gives it further advantage, where one of the laws of the game defeats the law of chance. It protects itself against the long progression by stipulating that it will not pay more than 6,000 francs on a single bet. Thus, whatever one plays on, the limit is reached before a success is assured with even reasonable certainty. Betting on the even chances, for instance, that is red



PART OF THE CASINO GARDENS

or black, odd or even, first eighteen or second eighteen, the player must double his mise after each loss in order to cover the previous losses; and if he starts at the minimum of five francs he has reached the limit of the bank in only eleven plays. And, as I have said, I myself saw red turn up seventeen times in succession.

## Canadian's Big Winnings

THE big players usually concentrate on the even chances. The odds of winning are better, or at least more frequent; there is less to keep track of, and the bets are easy to watch. This last feature is a consideration, since there are habits, mostly women, who make a living at the Casino from stealing other players' mises. In large bets, of course, a progression is impossible, the player waiting for the opening his system offers.

A few nights ago I saw two young men sit down to roulette and play the limit steadily on even chances. In less than half an hour they were 17,000 francs up, then down to 7,000, and when I left they were 34,000 to the good and the table was sending for more money. Last night two Italians, playing 9,200 francs on 16 numbers at each turn, rose to 34,000 francs of winnings, then down to 3,000, and I left them 58,000 ahead and still winning. But the one whose money was being risked was too unsteady of hand to handle the mise, and his face was ghastly.

I have as yet been unable to chase down the story that the big winner this season to date is a Canadian who is more than 2,500,000 francs ahead of the bank. I am told that one day last week he netted 600,000 francs.

It is these heavy winnings that attract the ordinary player. One sees and hears of the successes but never a word of the losses—unless, perhaps, in the obituary columns.

The chronic gambler whose health has begun to yield to the strain is a pitiful sight. I have in mind one who incorporates in his meagre body most of the symptoms. Thin to emaciation, his hands bony and long-fingered, eyes large and bloodshot, skin pasty and grey, like poor paper stretched over a rough frame, he sits seance after seance at roulette with his pile of counters before him, impervious to everything but the turn of the wheel. His face is a mask through which only the gleam of his feverish eyes tells of pleasure at a win. His long fingers twist and turn restlessly before him.

What surprised me most, especially in the early season, was the average age of the players. There are men and women by the score so old and decrepit that they move with difficulty, the lame, the halt, and even the almost blind. As the season advances younger life predominates, but the old man whose place has been popularly established beside the fireplace in slippers and dressing gown does his dinner jacket and plays with a steadiness and persistence that sends me home fagged while he is still at it. Old women who might be grandmothers with several "greats" before it are toggled in flaming evening dress and glistening headpieces they might have worn forty years ago.

In the matter of dress there is a license in Monte Carlo that knows no limit. In the private rooms at night evening dress is decidedly in the majority—that is, dinner jackets for men (I have seen only one swallow-tail)—but the man who prefers a coarse tweed attracts no attention whatever. In the general rooms everything goes with even more abandon. The game's the thing. The women are not conspicuously well dressed, but in jewels there is probably no place in the world that displays so much wealth on a single body.

Even after years in England, where size of stones overtops style of setting or arrangement, the display at Monte Carlo is startling. A woman with a diamond of less size than her own finger nail modestly hides her hand if she is sensitive to rivalry. I have seen wrists loaded with solid bands of diamonds for fully six inches, and literally hundreds of women wear four to six bracelets of precious stones on the one arm, many of them an inch wide.

Handbags, cigaret cases, gold lighters, wrist watches, cigaret holders, bandeaus are heavily jeweled. Diamond earrings reach to the shoulders. Cigaret smoking among women has gone out of fashion. The woman who smokes in the Casino private rooms is noticeable.

## Tip Every Step You Take in Paris Gentle Art of Bleeding Foreigners

An Experience in Going to the Theatre—Dancing Partners If You Pay When You are Accompanied by Elderly Man

By NORAH ELLIOTT

PARIS, FRANCE  
QUEL Melheur! The end of the month—our allowance but a shadow of its former self—and it is raining. We must take a taxi. So having hailed one we hop.

Arrived at the theatre, "How much, monsieur?"

"Six francs fifty, madame!"

"But why, monsieur? The register says four francs."

"Oh, pardon, madame, my mistake," said he, giving me five francs change from a twenty franc note.

"But, monsieur, you still owe me ten francs."

"Oh pardon a thousand times, madame. I thought you had given me ten francs."

On entering the theatre, we are stopped by a man crying, "Tickets, madame," but we have been warned against that trick, so we pay no attention. Should we give them to a man just outside the door, he would disappear immediately we had entered and sell them at a cut-price. And we would have been swindled.

Having passed the ticket holder, we hear a cry, "Your umbrella, madame," and having checked it, another "One franc, madame, thank you, madame."

At last we are shown to our places, and are

asking for the stubs of our tickets. "Yes, madame, but my tip, madame. Only one franc, madame, but it is not enough, madame, think of your exchange, madame. Oh, thank you, madame," as another franc is shoved into her hand.

At last, we are settled. But no; we hear, "A program, madame; one franc fifty, madame, thank you, madame."

And so we are left wondering how these people would live if there were no foreigners to tip them.

If one goes to a tea-dance or supper-dance in Paris, particularly with older men, one will be amused to see approaching an elegantly dressed and nimble footed young man, who will ask, "Would madame like to dance?"

Then one will realize suddenly that it is merely a professional dancer in search of a lavish fee. This charge may be anything from 20 to 100 francs. At the moment they are making salaries that might well make professors of other studies envious. Not only do they act as dancing partners, but they also give lessons, with perhaps a slight reduction for a series. They have been clerks, waiters, valets, foreign princes in distress, officers in the Russian army, but provided they are sufficiently attractive, they may be so much in demand that their calling becomes one of the most lucrative imaginable.