



Members of Old Oak Casablanca steel orchestra rehearse in their panyard at Argyle Street, Belmont. The panyard is to be converted into a mini-theatre in the round from February 13.

From the days of bamboo

ON EVERY occasion that the Old Oak Casablanca steelband makes a formal appearance it carries two flags — one its own banner, the other the red, white and blue flag of France. To those who find this strange there is a simple explanation.

The band, took its name from a classic film of the war years "Casablanca" which told the story of the meetings of Allied Commanders in the Algerian port. From the very beginning, therefore, it associated itself with that historic meeting and the French flag was never forgotten in its parades.

The proofs

Today Casablanca is one of the leading steelbands of the country and proof of its forward moving outlook can be seen in its latest achievement — conversion of the panyard at 50 Argyle Street into a mini thea-tre-in-the-round. Here visitors for carnival will be able to learn of the evolution of steelband from the days of the bamboo-bamboo boys.

There is no band better qualified to do this for Casablanca is a pioneer steelband whose formation dates back to the very days of bamboo-bamboo.

The Merryboys

It is no small credit to this band, which the historians tell us is an offspring of an earlier band, Merryboys, that it has been able to maintain the unity in the ranks and an honourable position in the movement.

Those who beat with the band today under Leader Ellis Thorne are of the fourth generation of players — all keeping the torch ablaze.



"Now I'll show you the 'Jukwai-ri'."