

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

July 3, 1957

Victoria

We sailed from Seattle on board the Princess Patricia at 8 o'clock in the morning along with a capacity crowd, all bound for either Victoria or Vancouver, B.C.

A goodly number of the passengers were members of the Gyro club, a service club which seems to be a popular organization in this part of the country. As usual with service clubs they appeared to be having a gay time away from home - some of the men were wearing rather huge orchid corsages and colorful hats to match the purple flowers. We have been told that there was plenty of gaiety last night at the very dignified Empress Hotel.

After three hours on the water, we were landed in the beautiful city of Victoria. The first impression of the English city is of the Empress Hotel and the Parliament buildings, which we had carried away with us following a visit here about a dozen years ago and which we have been hoping to revisit these many years. We have not been disappointed during this second visit. The residents of this delightful city are so hospitable and so willing to advise and guide the visitors who come here. Nothing seems to be too much trouble to be too much trouble to please. The service station attendants and the garages, the motel owners and the citizens are willing informants, and all are well versed as to the history of Vancouver Island and Victoria, directions, street names and all else that tourists wish to know. The visit has been a delightful experience.

Shop keepers take 5 per cent of each United States dollar and laugh when they tell us that for years we took their money for less, so now they are getting back at us. Most of the shop clerks have a bit of difficulty figuring how much to take when one hands over a \$5 bill. We all laugh and accept a bit of "kidding."

Today, with the 11 and 13 year olds we have visited the museum in the Parliament buildings, the Thunder Bird Park, Beacon Hill, the authentic English thatched roof country home at Royal Oak, Government House, Dunsmuir Castle and Butchart Gardens.

We have learned that there are 11,000 electric lights on the Government Buildings which illuminate the huge and impressive structure each night. We noticed today that the figure of the very top of the center building was

being recovered with gold leaf and the copper roof on the huge dome was being repolished!-

In the Thunder Bird Park an Indian father and his two sons are carving an exceptionally tall totem pole, which, when completed, will be shipped to England as a gift to Queen Elizabeth.

Victoria has grown from a Hudson's Bay Company fort and trading post, erected in 1829. It is noted for its beautiful flowers everywhere. Along the streets of the city there are two hanging baskets of varied flowers of all colors, at each lamp post and in front of most of the stores. We are told that the planting was done by one of the nurseries, hung and cared for by the City of Victoria. They are watered twice each week and are in place from June 1 to Oct. 1. Two city employees care for them, water them from trucks with long hose, with one man driving and the other using the hose. We noticed such plants as lobelia, geraniums, petunias, Ivy, marigolds, etc., all in wire baskets lined with moss, and protected with tin basins. Monterey might well use the same idea the full length of Alvarado street.