

Canadian Pacific



on board the

EMPRESS OF BRITAIN

bound for Montreal from Liverpool.

DEAR EVELYN & CO'Y;

This paper not only takes the typewriter impression very well but it is rather hard to erase I've found out already. But that is but a sideline on the fact that now I'm again able to use the typer to type this epistle to you-all well in advance of the actual delivery of it. There is no great amount of sense in writing this now since the mere fact that you will be getting it from shore at Montreal will be evidence enough that I will have arrived and that in due course the M/C and my baggage will be cleared perhaps in a couple of days at most and be duly dispatched by rail to Delhi and to my tender care as appropriate. I see it is a mere 124 odd miles Montreal to Ottawa so at the lackadayzical rate of locomotion that is my habit it would be a long days trip. Coupled with the fact that I certainly would not be able to get the m/c away from the Customs at the crack of dawn or anything silly like that, it is most likely that I'll get rolling on the 2nd day after arrival and spend the night in my side car tent en route to your place.

I've been busy almost exclusively in the internal regions of the ship these days, it having been cold and misty if not rainy outside, but I heard it reported by my cabin mates that we have already passed through an ice pack of crumbled up ice presumably swept out to sea by the combination of the St Lawrence and Gulf stream currents. Today (it is 7.00am. E.S.T. now) has been the roughest so far though even the great rolling billows barely make this ship with its stabilizers like the Orcares, do no more than heave and roll a bit. Of course there are plenty aboard who would not agree that the ship is marvellously steady yet I am continually amazed how the monstrous waves do no more

(2) more than cause the occasional extra big roll and now and then seem to try and pick up the ship and shake it like a dog would shake a rat it had caught.

At first I had thought that one of my big boxes had been put in the baggage room hold by error, but it turned up when I was down there yesterday though the time is going so fast that I doubt if I shall have time to do all the items planned to be done using stuff from that box (photo gear in the main). So far my time has been devoted to writing at various things -- letters and diary, with some completion of a recent Social Credit article which I hope will present the actual operation of the policy in a more easily understood manner. It is entitled with a rather flowery name, "Utopia Leads the Way with Social Credit". Such style of titling may not be in the Modern sophisticated manner but what else can I call it when the story is all about a group of Social Crediters who went to that newly found island in the South Indian Ocean and called it Utopia and proceeded to prove that the place could be made Utopia when the colonists could use the whole of their ingenuity unhampered by the dictatorial enslavement of the "old-world's" financial system.

Last night was our GALA NIGHT with a fancy dress parade etc. I donned my red flowered shirt made in Bougainville and the white drill trousers and ordinary black shoes. I have one of those fancy creasless and stain proof neck-ties of a loud canary yellow which after I had put button & hole on the red shirt's collar, I wore with rather startlingly drastic appearance. At dinner the table mates and those around about were very much aware of it to judge by the comments and the number of heads that turned as I passed. It was not really "fancy dress" in the sense of the GALA evening but it was certainly "fancier" than anything anyone would usually wear, even myself. (I had never before dared to wear the red shirt with the white trousers and yellow tie). However the evening began with the entirely stupid and inane game of "bingo" which quite put me off. Most people were just sitting around looking as they felt no doubt bored--a thing I can not do, not with all the so

(3) enjoyable activity always awaiting me to be done. So I returned and spent an hour or so typing a letter to a work mate of my Ch'oh days describing to him some of my experiences of Bougainville where he had been during the war there. The cabin mates came in with stories of the monstrosities that were the fancy dress, and also the usual tales of how everyone was so tightly packed into the "Empress Room" that almost none of the contestants could be seen much less appreciated. So I actually did have a more enjoyable time than the most of the bored unimaginative crowds even those who sought their enjoyment in the vagaries of smoke and drink if not women.

Next to me at the table are two Belfast Boys one of whom has been a sailor (steward, caterer, stowee and "donkey-greaser") for some good long time but now is going to settle for some shore-job in one of those lines. Anyway he let drop a remark early in the trip that the ship was "dead" meaning there was a lack of entertainment of the "floor-show" type etc. I challenged him on the point and in almost no time the whole table was involved in about as lively a verbal discussion, debate, or arguement as could be wished for, quite leaving the simple Irish boy lost in his original protestations, along with the one girl at the table then to whom he had been making the statement. Of course the talk was entirely non-sensical and tom foolery but it was fun for all the 5 men of us that were at the table.

The tables vary all the way from 4 to 12 seats each, in a most luxuriously appointed and beautifully finished dining room. The service of course can be described in any way that the diners choose but after the variety of service that I've had in the past 5 months of travelling on an admittedly great variety of ships I think that I'm qualified to say that this ship's dining service is the best yet, and quite good enough for anyone. The food is very well done and all of the best available, something not so evident on the Orcades, but above all the coffee is the "only" real coffee that I've tasted almost since leaving Canada the almost five or six years ago, in spite of the fact that I am not a coffee addict in anyway.

(4) I see that it is now almost 9.00am. which means that soon the chimes that the stewards ring thru the corridors will call me to breakfast, 2nd-sitting. Just now I'm in the writing room which has filled up since I came. It is a tribute to the superior design of this ship that tho' it is some 2½ thousand tons smaller than the Orcades it carries its full passenger list on this trip of some 1600 people with less apparent over crowding than the Orcades carried the mere 700 or 800 passengers of its reported capacity of 1290. So it is that here in the writing room we are not subjected to the noise and confusion of the babbling crowds in the Lounges, and in the Library the silence is proper for those that want to read. There play rooms are ample apparently for all the very small children and the larger ones have the run of everywhere else the passengers are allowed except the bar (under 14 not allowed!!!)

Breakfast is over now and I'm in my air-conditioned cabin where it is nice and warm after the somewhat chilly dining room. The deck officers were putting up cords across the stair head spaces or "squares" this morning because as he said, (the one I asked) they might have to take the stabilizers "off" when encountering ice and then of course the ships motion would be greater and people might need the extra "hanging on" facilities!!!

Flourescent lighting is universal with indirect white or amber indirect lighting according to the colour scheme in the Public Rooms. The rooms all have airconditioning of course with the temperature and humidity controlled by thermostat. In the cabins however there is an adjustable control dial which the inmates can adjust to suit themselves in addition. I'm on "A" deck where the cabins have showers and toilet to each as well as being quite roomy with good sized writing desk too, (tho' this is too high for typing and I can hold the typewriter in its case on my knees more easily.

I seem to have said all to be said. except that we should not be docking in Montreal before the 12th or 13th at least which being the week end may mean even more delay in my getting away. This letter and the others I'm writing Home and to Alice should go ashore and on their way ahead of time from our docking at Quebec a day before or so, the reaching of Montreal. SO LONG for now from: *W. D. S.*