

A huge banquet served to us in one of the Agricultural Fair Buildings, consisted of some seven or eight courses including caviar, hors d'oeuvres such as mushrooms, delicious sardines and relishes, boiled fish, roast duck and numerous other delicacies. My Russian meal partner insisted on drinking numerous Vodka toasts to the RCMP and Canadian friendship and I was well pleased that the huge meal served to offset any effect of this extremely potent drink. Afterwards we went to the Gorky State Farm just outside Moscow. The director, a round chubby-faced man in what resembled an army uniform was a real down-to-earth person whose face lighted up as he showed us the tall black cows, pigs, and chickens, but who felt most uncomfortable in the farm's nursery and kindergarten, especially when the little ones started to wail at the sudden appearance of numerous strangers. (Mothers leave their babies and children in the nursery and kindergarten during the day while they work on the farm.)

Later that evening I accompanied the Minister to a football game between the Spartaks and Kiev, at the Dynamo Stadium. The Stadium is a huge cement arena, which holds 80,000 people and though the game was not a crucial one, the stands were three-quarters full. The Spartaks played a superior brand of soccer, quite as good as some I had witnessed at Wembley in England, and the crowd obviously enjoyed the contest, cheered, groaned and reacted in much the same manner as any Canadian, English or American crowd would.

Midnight found us aboard the Russian Express "Red Arrow" bound for Leningrad. It was a comfortably furnished train and while the cars were not as modern as our newer Canadian coaches, they were more roomy. Leningrad was reached in the morning and the Minister and Mrs. Pearson were met by A/Mayor Strzhalkovsky.

We spent a full day in Leningrad seeing its many palaces, mostly heritages from the days of Tsarist Russia. The Gulf of Finland, numerous canals and bridges, a background of huge stone buildings, the golden spires of St. Peter's and St. Paul's Church and the dome of St. Isaac's Cathedral, all gave the city a grand and orderly appearance. A tour of the "Hermitage", an art museum in the former Palace of Catherine the Great, revealed an amazing wealth of paintings, precious stones, statues and other treasures. One room contained a large collection of Rembrandt's paintings; another, Peter the Great's Throne Room, diamond-studded saddle blankets and sword; others were filled with Wedgwood china, pewter ware, teak chests and so on. Our guide told us that a complete tour would take from four to five hours. From the Hermitage we journeyed to the outskirts to visit the palace, and surrounding grounds, of Peter the Great.

The palace itself was being repaired, having been damaged during the siege of Leningrad in World War II. The grounds contained countless pathways, fountains and waterworks of every sort.

That evening the Minister and his party were guests of the A/Mayor and local Soviet at a sumptuous banquet and at the conclusion of it each Canadian was presented with a large picture album of Leningrad and surroundings. That night we journeyed back to Moscow aboard the same "Red Arrow" Express, arriving on Sunday morning.

From then until our departure from Moscow on October 12, the program included trade talks, conferences, visits to the opera and personal sight-seeing in the department stores, the Mausoleum where the bodies of Lenin and Stalin lie in state, the chandelier-festooned entrances to the underground railway system - "the Metro" - and attendance at a reception given by Messrs. Molotov, Kaganovich and Malenkov at the Spiridonovka Palace. This reception was attended by representatives from many of the embassies in Moscow.

On October 11 the Minister, accompanied by Mr. Watkins, Mr. Crépault and Mr. Ignatieff boarded a Soviet Air Force plane to pay a visit to Premier Bulganin and Secretary Khrushchev holidaying in the Crimea. Before the Minister left, all members of the Canadian party received a gift from the U.S.S.R. Government, the writer receiving an attractive hand-painted cigarette box. Next morning I accompanied Mrs. Pearson to the Vnukova Airport and with our Russian navigator and radio operator aboard, the C-5 left for Saki in the Crimea (near Sevastopol and perhaps familiar to the RCMP contingent of World War I.) There we were treated to our final Russian banquet at a pretty sea-side restaurant in the town of Yevpatoriya. Shortly afterwards we met Mr. Pearson and party and said good-bye to our Russian airmen. Leaving the U.S.S.R. we headed out over the Black Sea and then followed a route across Turkey and Iraq, passing the lights of the ancient City of Baghdad and arriving in Basra, Iraq at about 7 p.m. - and in a temperature of 90 degrees.

While I was registering at the Shatt-el-Arab Hotel, I was the innocent instigator of a rather amusing bit of by-play. It seems an "English" type noticed me standing at the desk and upon joining his companion at a bar nearby remarked that he had seen a "Canadian Mountie" in Basra. His doubting companion came out to have a look and then and there they both decided they had had enough and staggered off homeward.