

The Royal Visit to Ottawa

A report on the gigantic spectacle of the Royal Visit told by Sgt. J. W. E. Hayes, in charge of the Photographic Detail, a squad especially formed to assist and govern the actions of newspaper photographers, with additional material contributed by the Quarterly staff.

WHILE Ottawa's population soared past the 400,000 mark one day last October, in advance of the visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, security-conscious RCMP officials, charged with the demanding responsibility of insuring the personal safety of Royalty, braced themselves for a serious task. A memorable tour of the same Royal couple in 1951—the Queen then appearing as Princess Elizabeth, Duchess of Edinburgh—had acquainted them with the problems which needed to be coped with, and others, unexpected, that could arise. Since the more recent visit lasted only four and a half days and was restricted to the city of Ottawa, the same problems on a much lesser scale existed. Reviewing all aspects of an event, now historic, it can be said that the recent visit of Her Majesty, Queen of Canada, was in every way an outstanding success.

A week or so prior to the arrival of the Royal guests, one could not drive through the streets of Ottawa without feeling a surge of expectation, sensing the spirit and magnitude of the event for which elaborate preparations were being made on every hand. Elevated platforms for television cameras and crews, spaced at even intervals along the route over which the Queen and Prince Philip would pass, testified to the effort being expended in preparation for what was to be the most complete coverage of a Royal event since TV's report of the Coronation. The stone fronts of downtown office buildings, now draped in miles of red, white and blue bunting,

had taken on a new glamor; on different levels, flags, fluttering with every wisp of breeze, hung from thousands of windows.

Other fields of endeavor showed similar signs of activity: in the spacious Naval drill hall of HMCS *Carleton* on Dows Lake were assembled six of Canada's top military bands, engaged in mass rehearsals; under the direction of Sqdn. Ldr. Edward A. Kirkwood, supervisor of music for the RCAF, ten capable conductors took turns at trying to co-ordinate the efforts of some 250 musicians. Not to be overlooked was "N" Division of the RCMP, where a troop of riders, just returned from a tour of the United Kingdom, practised the role they would fill in escorting the Queen to the Opening of Parliament.

Preparations were complete with the exception of the official Government briefing of the press, approximately 800 all told, 200 of them accredited photographers, all representatives of news agencies and newspapers, large and small, from Canada, U.S.A., and Europe. From past experiences a number of the photographers and reporters, were familiar with the Ottawa scene, protocol and police procedure, but the majority were strangers and it was essential that everyone involved thoroughly understood what was expected of them.

It was therefore decided between members of the Government Hospitality Committee and the RCMP that the briefing be held in the "A" Division Barracks, during the evening of October 11. NCOs and constables directly concerned with