

DorleLettersB L0001 (English)

Vancouver, Sept 22, 58 1958

Dear Mother and Siblings!

Well, it's about time for something to turn up. Yours arrived. But I have to disappoint you again, because the travelogue isn't typed up yet. It's just so long that I really want to type it with carbon copies. I'll send it as soon as possible, by airmail. But so much has happened here in Vancouver that I could write a lot. You already knew that I ended up in Vancouver, since I always have all my possessions with me in the VW and could always pitch my tent. The main reason I drove to Vancouver was because I want to apply for a visa to Alaska, and I can only do that from Vancouver or Edmonton. Alaska was magnificent, I would have loved to work there. So I landed in Vancouver on September 1st, after being on the road for 3 weeks and 3 days. I went straight to the Ochs family, where I was immediately fed and got results right away on where to look and their husband. On Tuesday the 2nd, I went looking for a job; unemployment is really bad here. But, even in the middle of summer for women too. I went to my bank, the one I had worked for in Toronto. Then I was told to wait for a phone call. On Wednesday, I had to introduce myself at a branch, and I was told that I could start on Monday. That was very reassuring, of course! The manager had immediately telephoned Toronto and got a very good report from there. So I was hired for the same pay and for the same job. My salary was higher than the men in this branch. So I haven't lost anything at all with my move, which is really nice. I'm enjoying the work a lot again, the girls are very nice, the manager is only 38 years old and always in a good mood. Imagine, the bank is only two blocks from my old bank from two years ago. I stopped by there once, too, and they all recognized me right away. I've already been invited over by my English friend from there, which was very nice. In general, I thought I would always be in the evenings now that I was away from Toronto, but I haven't noticed any of that so far. I'm invited out somewhere almost every evening. Today is Monday and the whole week is already booked up. One evening I'm invited to my colleague's, a Dutch woman. She is very nice, has about the same interests, she's married, they go fishing or hiking every weekend, have nice records and books, and do photography. On Thursdays, I'm at Gudrun's, Schwerti's Marianne, we're doing crafts and playing the recorder again, yes, I'm in a recorder group now, of course. Besides Marianne, there's another German, a Pole, a Canadian woman, and me. Marianne, Waldemar, and the Pole can play very well, though; they play the most difficult pieces by sight-reading, with soprano, alto, tenor, and bass recorders, and even a piccolo. It sounds truly wonderful. I have now and am already noticing progress. We always meet on Fridays or Saturdays for that.

I have a very nice and cheap place to live here, \$20 a month. The Ochs family are really very nice, and above all, they can really use the \$20, since Mr. Ochs has been unemployed for 1 1/2 years and the whole house is empty. The five girls are all married and Peter has his own studio where he also lives; by the way, he's going to university again. Around the house are magnificent flowerbeds and also roses, and in the back is a large vegetable garden and a small, self-built greenhouse. On Sunday I was with Mt. Beher to the States. That from here is .90 miles away from here is about When we drove back, everything was still in bloom

(flowers), and up top there was a crazy snowstorm. shoveled snow and got suitcases made again for potato salad. It was ice cold, everything was white. And then a few hours lower, it was beautiful, warm autumn again. The only snow, you can see it from my window and yes, just a snow-capped peak with a blue sky, I've never seen anything like that in the Alps. It is the only mountain in that direction that is visible from so far away. In the evening I was at the cultural circle here, there was a discussion about art and kitsch. 4 painters and sculptors were at it, each one thought his way of painting was the right one. It was very interesting. But tomorrow will have I haven't praised yet, you can probably imagine that. I'm curious to hear from this one, I don't even know what she does for work.

How was the harvest for you? Or are you probably still at it. How are the prices? What's the wine doing? The prospects they have. right-of-way they almost run under your wheels. But more accidents happen here than in the East, where pedestrians sometimes have to stand in the middle of traffic on the white line for 5 minutes until they can get to the other side. Then here so many streets without stop signs, so it's all about right-of-way, which we also don't have in the East, where every side path has a stop sign. In Ontario, they're now introducing the 10-point system, which is already in effect in several provinces. Every driver gets 10 points in January, and depending on the offense, he loses points, e.g., one point for a left turn where you're not allowed to make one, and 3 points for illegal parking, etc. If you've lost all your points, then you've also lost your driver's license until the end of the year. In January, the whole thing starts all over again. My insurance paid for a new windshield and my headlight covers; the windshield had 8 cracks from stones that were kicked up against it on the Alaska Highway.

I enjoy the work, we have a very nice manager. I'm doing the same job again, but unfortunately I don't have as much to do as in Toronto. The branch is smaller, too. Recently there was a big commotion at the bank. In Ottawa, a teller (that's what I do, a man or woman with cash) simply took all his money on a Friday evening and took off. On Monday he was sick, and it wasn't until Monday evening that the others broke open his safe and discovered that 260,000 dollars in cash was missing. Every teller has their own money in their private safe, and it's only rarely counted. But after 3 weeks they found him in Colorado, he had made a good life for himself there, had spent 50,000 dollars in 21 days, and cheerfully told the police that he had thought, if you're going to do it, do it right, and packed up the whole lot. Robberies happen here all the time, and more than in Toronto, also forgeries of cheques are so frequent and good that you can't trust anyone anymore. That makes my job very difficult, because you have to be suspicious and thus offend many honest people if you're not diplomatic. Because if I accept a bad cheque, it's my loss. But unemployment is to blame for it. Here in Vancouver, unemployment is probably the highest in all of Canada. It's difficult even for girls to get a job, and for men it's often impossible. And this year unemployment is supposed to be 50% higher than last year, with over 1 million people becoming unemployed. Mr. Ochs has been unemployed for 2 years already. Others, even young people, are thankful if they can get a position as a street sweeper or office cleaner. Every day, lines of unemployed people stand at the Salvation Army and the Red Cross for food, and at night many sleep on the benches in the park. In Toronto it was nowhere near that bad.

I haven't heard from Liesel in detail for a long time. Warm greetings from Paul there.

The meetings on Mondays are also always very nice. On Wednesdays I go to Scottish folk dancing, also there. Our bank pays for 3/4 of all club fees, because our manager wants us to play sports and join clubs. In the car we also sing and still go to restaurants together. At Christmas we will probably go away for 4 days, to Oregon in the States. If that doesn't work out, then definitely to the ski cabin on Mt. Hollyburn for Christmas Eve and the two holidays. Since Thursday and Friday are holidays and Saturday and Sunday follow, we have a nice long weekend. I bought the best safety bindings for my skis, the kind that open automatically when you would otherwise normally twist your foot when you fall sideways or forward. That's cheaper than a broken ankle. On Saturday we're having a big ski day at the ski cabin on Mt. Hollyburn. There will also be dancing for days. You take the chairlift up from the city.

I also had to get my driver's license here again, because the one from Ontario isn't valid here. Well, of course I passed. I did well on the reaction tests; the usual reaction time is 2 seconds, I had 1/2 a second. Here in Vancouver, hearing and vision are also tested. My driver's license now says that I'm only allowed to drive with glasses, but I do that anyway. The traffic and the rules are a bit different here again, especially the pedestrians get away with everything here, the Alaskan sled dogs, are also very beautiful animals a mix of wolf and dog. Did you actually have a laundry apprentice over the summer? Are you getting an apprentice? What is Irmgild doing? Is she out of school now?

I still have my brothers, all in Toronto, it's strange without Ferikovic, you only realize then that you used them quite often. I have one with 20 tapes.

Now I want to write your travelogue, otherwise it will never get finished. Warm regards,
Your Karl.