



MEMORIES—Eszter and Ferenc (Frank) Erdelyi, Hungarian refugees now living in Los Angeles, recall 1957 Inaugural events which they attended as guests of The Times. They'll see this year's inauguration at home on television. Times photo

GUESTS OF THE TIMES IN 1957

Hungarian Refugee Couple Too Busy for Inaugural This Year

Just four years ago, a pair of wide-eyed Hungarian refugees thrilled as the United States went through its annual four-year spectacle of inaugurating its President.

They sat in special reserved seats in Washington, D.C., for the colorful parade. That evening, they danced at one of the Inaugural Balls that marked the beginning of the second term in office of President Eisenhower.

That was the lot of Ferenc (Frank) Erdelyi and his charming blond wife, Eszter, after they were selected by The Times from among a group of refugees at Camp Kilmer, N.J., to be the newspaper's guests for the historic event.

Second View—on TV

Thursday, Frank—he prefers the American version of his name — and Eszter made plans for their second view of an inauguration.

Unlike that of 1957, however, this one will be via television.

"We just can't take the time to go to Washington, even if we had the opportunity," Eszter explained. "We are both busy cramming for our examinations to become United States citizens."

The four-year interval between their dream days in Washington and the present has been one of unbeliev-

able wonder for the grateful couple.

"There are no words to express what we feel in our hearts for the opportunities that have come to us since we came to America," Eszter said. "Nowhere else could this happen to us."

"Frank obtained a job as a foreign car mechanic and last April, in partnership with a Hollander, Ted Wagon, opened his own garage in Santa Monica.

"Fortunately, I was able to obtain work as a technician in a Hollywood film laboratory so we could continue to send some money, food and clothing back to the relatives we had to leave behind when we fled from Hungary.

"Their letters tell us how this has helped them. Those same letters by reading be-

tween the lines, tell us how fortunate we are to be here in Southern California."

Frank said he has been writing to former workers in garages in which he worked in Hungary. No one has ever been allowed to answer him, he said.

One of the most exciting events of their four years in America was the way the country elects a President, Eszter says.

"We were so excited the evening they counted the ballots that we stayed up all night to find out who would win," she confided.

Then she let a bit of bipartisan feeling creep into the conversation with, "I feel so sorry for Vice President Nixon. He is just a wonderful man."

Comparing our elections with those in her native country, she said, "there is no such interest as you have here in Hungary. The best thing over there is not to say anything. You might put your ballot in the box, but you were never sure it would be counted."

Every now and then she reaches into the closet and dons the pink evening gown in which she danced with her husband at the 1957 Inaugural Ball.

"Then I have to pinch myself to make sure it isn't all a dream," she laughed.

Hopes to Meet Mother

Now, however, she has one ambition aside from her desire to attain citizenship.

"God willing, I hope to have a reunion with my mother this spring in Switzerland," Eszter confided.

But one thing is certain, Eszter and Frank's greatest dream will become a reality when they stand before a federal judge next January, raise their hands and become citizens of the country of their choice.



DRESSED FOR 1957 BALL—Eszter Erdelyi, dressed for inaugural Ball, shows off her gown to her husband Ferenc in Washington department store. Times photo