



Maj. and Mrs. Eric Neerbek, king and queen of the island of Elleore off the coast of Denmark, chat with Dr. and Mrs. William Gibson, Appleton, their hosts during a visit to this city last week. The Danish couple are owners of a five-acre plot which annually is the site of what is the equivalent of this country's Boys States. (Post-Crescent Photo)

Recognized by Denmark

King and Queen of Tiny Island Visit Appleton

"Our only weapon is to laugh," a popular Danish expression goes.

And apparently with this in mind, a group of Danish teachers in 1942 bought an island where they set up a model representative government to be run by their students.

This exercise in government was done under the eyes of Nazi troops occupying the Scandinavian country. The idea of

teaching young men democratic principles while under the yoke of the Third Reich must have amused the oppressed Danes.

Today, that government is still in existence—but for only one month a year. It is the government of a summer camp which combines aspects of this country's Boy Scouts, American Legion, Boys' States and other youth activities.

Royalty Visit Appleton

Maj. and Mrs. Eric Neerbek, the king and queen of that nation—the Island of Elleore, were in Appleton last week visiting the king's cousin, Mrs. William Gibson.

Dr. and Mrs. Gibson had met the couple in June when Dr. Gibson was a delegate to the International Ophthalmic Congress in Denmark.

The Neerbeks are on a three-week tour of this country visiting relatives. It is not their first trip, for King Eric—a major in the Danish army—was at Fort Benning, Ga., for six months.

Their kingdom — a five-acre ("at low tide") island about 700 yards from the mainland in a fjord which feeds into the North

Sea — and its government are recognized by the Danish government.

Markets Stamps

It has its own post office (with a vast collection of stamps which are marketed all over the world) currency, army, parliament, prime minister and other aspects of government.

The temporary citizens — all Danish boys 16 to 18 years old — hold dual citizenships: that of Denmark and that of Elleore. The youths come to the island for about a month in late June. At other times, Elleore is deserted.

There once was a house on the island, but the Danish government — perhaps in an extra-territorial mood — ordered it removed. Now the royalty resides on a boat, while the boys "rough it" in tents on the island.

"Palace" Is Boat

The boat, a converted 75-foot fishing trawler which has a dining room capable of feeding 60, sports an operable machine gun. Asked whether Elleore expected to "invade" Denmark, King Eric said the gun is purely for "defense."

The youths, however, do participate in war games. Their uniforms are old Danish uniforms modified by additions from uniforms of other European nations.

Elleore was the site of the filming of one of the first motion pictures. In 1907, a Danish film company released some lions on the island to film a story of an African hunt.

This 17-minute movie was banned in Denmark but it was taken to Sweden and distributed all over the world.

King Eric is the third king of Elleore, but his wife is the first queen.