



Sonja Groenewald . . . a million miles by air developed her dress sense

Air Hostess Says Flying Teaches Good Dress Sense

By OLIVE DICKASON

Charming, ash-blonde Sonja Groenewald, who dropped by in Montreal from a visit recently, believes there's nothing like flying for developing a good dress sense.

She should know . . . she's been flying for eight years, and is the second girl in the world to tot up more than a million miles in the air. "That's a long time in the air," the blue-eyed South African laughed, "particularly for a person like me, who prefers to keep her feet on the ground."

Sonja is senior hostess for South African Airways; with eight years service behind her, Sonja is an old hand at a job that traditionally loses its holders after three or four years.

Wardrobe Limited

How does flying develop dress sense? "You must remember," said Sonja, who looked cool in a summer cotton, "that we are allowed only 40 pounds of baggage, just like the passengers. We're gone from home for 14 days at a stretch, and on the Johannesburg to London route, which I fly, we stop over in Nairobi, Cairo and Rome. What is well dressed in Nairobi is not appropriate to Rome; and what is glamorous in Rome is over-dressed in London."

Besides different customs, there are different climates to consider, Sonja continued. She considers the women of Rome to be the best dressed. "The women in Italy dress so beautifully that even men, who claim they aren't interested in clothes, can't help noticing them," Sonja remarked.

She herself makes most of her own clothes, and when in other countries concentrates on buying accessories. She buys shoes in London, handbags and gloves in Rome, jewelry and brocades in Cairo, and unusual items such as leopard-skin belts in Nairobi.

Visits Here

Sonja flew to Canada on her holidays, to visit friends here. In Montreal she stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm G. MacLean. Canada interests her to the point that she would like to stay here, and is laying tentative plans to that effect. At present, however, she is on her way back to Kenya, where she is joining friends to go on a photographic safari.

Besides her native Afrikaans and English, Sonja speaks French and Spanish fluently, and has an acquaintance with several other languages. She is not, however, a nurse; in South Africa, it is not necessary for air hostesses to be trained nurses. There is too great a shortage of nurses in her country, she said, to use them for work where their training is not fully used.

One of the more interesting aspects of her work is taking passengers on sight-seeing tours when for some reason the air-

plane is delayed. "It's a wonderful way to see the world," she smiled.

By this time, however, she has done so much travelling that she is not too interested in it any more. Neither does she recommend air hostess work as a career . . . too strenuous. "You can only stay as a hostess for a certain length of time," she observed. "After that, it is too exhausting."