

# Local People Attend Convention to Mark Centennial of Empress of Ireland's Maiden Voyage

On June 29, the one-hundredth anniversary of the maiden voyage of the Empress of Ireland was celebrated at the Calgary Telus Convention Centre. Organized by Marion Kelch and Irene Johnstone of the Empress of Ireland Artifacts Committee, guests from across Canada attended the one-day session the theme of which was "Sailing the Empress & Settling the Prairies".

Author Derek Grout from Quebec launched the convention with an in-depth description of the maiden voyage of the Empress. Diver Rob Rondeau presented an interesting history of the Empress of Britain, sister ship of the famous liner.

Assistance on researching what ship one's ancestors might have sailed was provided by Margaret Mann of the Nanaimo Family History Society. Karen Auto from Kelowna, B.C. read a portion of her book *Second Watch*, a children's novel about the



Some of the guests from across Canada at an Empress of Ireland banquet. ©PROVOST NEWS PHOTO.

Empress. Then author of *Forgotten Empress*, Dave Zeni from Massachusetts, U.S.A., gave a detailed description of the Empress's final voyage and its tragic sinking.

Artifacts retrieved from the Empress of Ireland, including a few recently purchased items, were on display along with numerous

photographs of those passengers who once sailed on the liner. The number of descendants present was distributed evenly between those whose relatives perished on the final voyage and those whose relatives

sailed to Canada on the liner during its eight years of service. Of great interest was an original ticket granting passage for Ludwig Satre

**More Empress Convention, B11**



Marion Kelch receives an award for her organizational efforts and years of work helping to save artifacts from the Empress of Ireland. The sinking of the Empress of Ireland was Canada's worst maritime disaster. ©PROVOST NEWS PHOTO.

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