

# The day Limerick's Mayoral Chain vanished

THE story of how the Mayor of Limerick's ceremonial chain vanished for 24 hours leaked out today after eight years of secrecy.

It happened in Boston in 1957 when Mayor G. E. Russell and the Mayoress were raising funds for a memorial to the two murdered Mayors Seoirse Clancy and Michael O'Callaghan.

Said Ald Russell today: "It was the first and only time that I left the chain out of my hands during the whole four week tour.

"Among those who met us on arrival in Boston were Mayor Heinz and the City Greeter. Seemingly the latter official was supervising transport arrangements for he took charge of our baggage—including the ceremonial chain.

"Our reception was a typical example of American courtesy and efficiency. Everything went smack smooth until we reached our hotel and found to our horror that the case containing the 137-years-old chain was missing."

Ald Russell went on to describe the frantic search which was conducted by the hotel manager and a team of house detectives.

He recalled: "The search went on for hours and the detectives seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely. But all I could think of was what explanation I was going to offer the City Council when I returned."

That the story has a happy ending is probably due to the quick thinking of the Mayoress who had been doing some detective work on her own. "Let's check with Mayor Heinz," she suggested to the detectives.

They did, and the little black bag was eventually discovered in the unlocked booth of the car which brought them from the airport.

The ceremonial chain will leave Limerick again next week when Mayor Jack Danagher goes on a short tour of the United States. The three previous occasions on which the chain was taken abroad were 1847, when it was in London and 1901 when Mayor John Daly first took it to the U.S.

The records show that it was lost once before — during a race meeting at Newcastle, Co. Limerick, in the early 1800s.