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As I See It



by Elmore Philpott

PEOPLE'S DIPLOMACY

NEW DELHI, India.—When one of the most influential editors in India told me that the Western democracies in general and the U.S.A. in particular were losing out in Asia because they lacked direct contact with the Asian masses, I decided to see how the Asians were acting within their own family circle.

A Moslem friend told me that the Ambassador of Afghanistan was to speak that very afternoon to a students' meeting.

I drove to the Dasgupta College at 5:30 on a Saturday afternoon. The college building itself was crude by our standards, and I marvelled to hear that it had no less than 1,000 enrolled students who attended on the two-shift system. There must have been over 400 of the 500 total of the afternoon shift present, and again I asked myself:

"What percentage of our Canadian students would stay till 5:30 on a Saturday afternoon to hear a speech on their next-door neighbor country?"

THE MEETING ITSELF TOOK place outdoors. The air was soft and warm. There was good loud speaker equipment, with two microphones. I was a bit distracted from the speeches because literally hundreds, maybe thousands of birds swooped overhead. They are called kites, and have an annoying caw, like crows.

As the meeting proceeded little streeturchins, barefoot, passed back and forth in front of the crowd.

THE AFGHAN AMBASSADOR to India is a friendly down-to-earth sort of chap in his 40's. He spoke in English and apologized in advance for his lack of fluency, though in fact his language was excellent.

He spoke for 35 minutes and over and over stressed the theme that India and Afghanistan had always been linked in past history—by literature, religions, as well as by geography. He gave us all a first-class history lesson.

When he came down to the present situation it became very clear that Afghanistan's relations with India are closer and more cordial than are those between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The ambassador was most explicit in urging "self-determination" for the Pathans and kindred tribesmen who make up what is now the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan. Although these were of precisely the same race and religion as their next-door neighbors in Afghanistan, he said his government made no claim to include them in Afghanistan's borders. But it did believe they should have precisely the same right as Pakistan had claimed for itself.

Members Visit New Brunswick

OTTAWA—About eighty Members of Parliament and their wives spent three days recently in St. John, N.B., at the invitation of Daniel A. Riley, Liberal member for St. John-Albert. Mr. Riley's guests were entertained by the St. John Board of Trade, the Province of New Brunswick and the city of St. John. The visitors found St. John in the midst of mid-winter activities, including the handling of wheat,

namely, the right to a separate government of its own if they so chose.

AFTER THE MEETING proper, they invited me, as an obvious foreigner from faraway, to have tea and cakes with the executive and the ambassador. I found him a jolly fellow. He agreed that the border between Canada and the U.S.A. was the freest and friendliest in the world. I did not want to be even one small corner of a wet blanket and tell him that, although that is the truth, even our free border is not quite as free or friendly as it was in the good old days.

THE AMBASSADOR TOLD ME a good joke. Everybody knows that Russia is Afghanistan's big neighbor to the north. Now she has Communist China as a next-door neighbor, too.

That means that she has to tread very warily in the international field. In most bloc-clash votes at the UN, Afghanistan abstains. Around the UN, the boys took to kidding the Afghans, calling the country Abstainistan.

THE ONLY MINOR MISHAP that I suffered at the meeting was when they passed me a plate of what looked like little white balls. I wasn't sure what they were or what I was supposed to do with them, but my neighbor whispered they were a sort of candy. I ate one and it tasted fine. The only catch was that it spurted juice all over my nice tie and shirt.

I CAME AWAY FROM THE meeting with a better idea of what they mean when they say there is a "renaissance in Asia" and that there has to be a more direct kind of peoples' diplomacy if the Western democracies are to keep in step with it.

ray.. Reflects and Reminisces

With Whitehorse to be the new capital of Yukon, Dan McGrew should feel strangely disturbed. He's never known anything else save Dawson. The lady known as Lou may also conclude there is something pending.

IT'S GOING TO BE more difficult to buy a car. More walking will probably be essential. Less driving means more exercise. That ought to lead to an improvement in general health which in turn will bring about reduced hospital service. Hence, brother, in the midst of all our blanket blank woes and troubles, observe how things have a way of getting around the corner after all.

A snow storm, seven boys and eleven marbles were all seen together at the same time yesterday, Thursday, March 15. Usually, one can depend on the evidence of his senses.

"EYES RIGHT" Bearskins from Northern British Columbia would have been

welcome in London this year but it seems the creatures of the wild were not numerous. However, no one will be disappointed as the business of enjoying the various stages of the festival proceeds forthwith. The King will salute the Guards as they swing past. The spectacle will be a smart one, "gorbily."

THEY WON'T MIND It seems a shade early to take for granted, tales of fewer tourists, steamship cancellations and a renewal of anxiety over the situation in Korea. They were not so timid in previous international arguments. As a rule, mid-summer boats were packed. They wanted change—anything to get away from dusty, stuffy routine to the sunlit seas of the north. And should a dash of adventure be thrown in, so much the more entertaining!

Dawson is going to be out of

Be Wise! Get Wiser's DELUXE WHISKY

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Transportation Report

RECOMMENDATIONS made by the Royal Commission on Transportation, whose report was tabled in the House of Commons yesterday, are such as might have been reasonably expected. For a long time it has been obvious that loosely-knit transportation services in Canada have been due for streamlining and co-ordinating towards the end of efficiency and adequacy.

Transportation, if the report is adopted, would be considered from the long-range and over-all standpoint. Control of the various forms of transport would be unified and highway transport would also be brought into the federal picture. It is easy to see where the implementation of the recommendations would result in more satisfactory service on a sounder financial basis.

For a long time it has been recognized that the Canadian National Railways should get some kind of a new deal and be relieved of the load of debt that the system inherited and which these many years has hung as a millstone around its neck.

All in all, it appears that much good could ensue from actions which should not be too long in ensuing from the recommendations of the commission.

Still No. 1 Need

PRINCE RUPERT seems to be back about where it started in regard to the long-campaigned-for air field development. Department of National Defence is reported reliably to have ruled out the project as a defence necessity.

We may have our ideas but it is difficult for us to argue from the defence standpoint. It is a technical matter and there are experts upon whose decisions we must stand or fall.

But we do know that from the commercial and business standpoint, a landing field as near as possible to Prince Rupert is becoming more and more a vital necessity. There is no other community of this size or importance in Canada that has not facilities for land-planes. The present service is slow and circuitous, inconvenient and inadequate because, as long as we have to depend upon sea craft, we cannot have adequate size and speed.

We may have to start all over again on the campaign but we cannot give up now for, until we are provided with a landing field by some means or another, Prince Rupert is going to be completely behind the times and inadequately serviced from the standpoint of transportation. And that is not good.

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