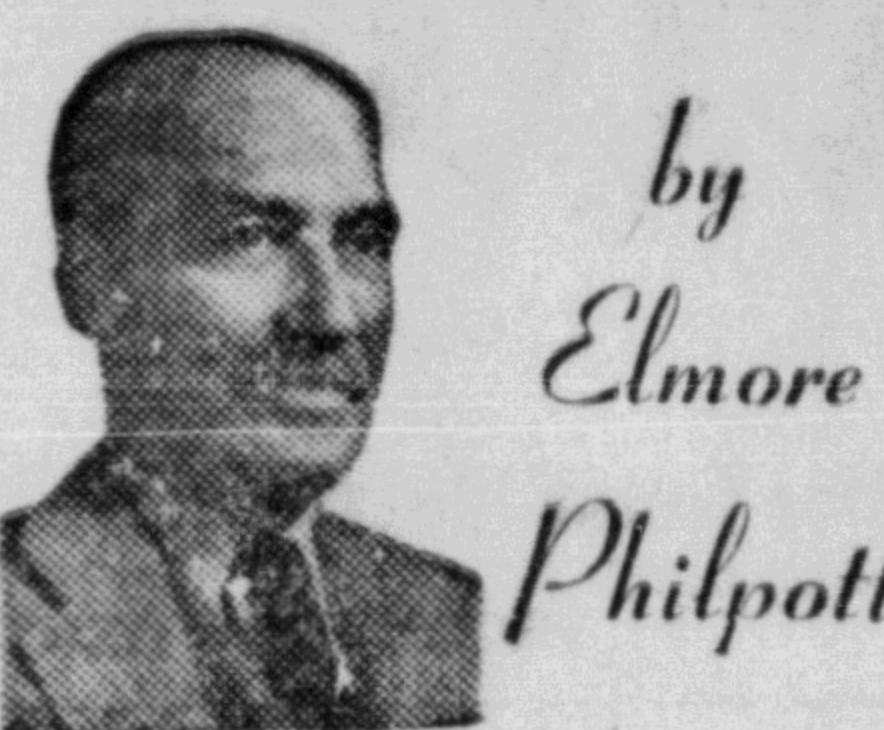


Friday, April 6, 1951

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As I See It



MEETS SHEIKH SAHIB

JAMMU, Kashmir. — As you fly north over the Punjab you think "how much like Western Canada it is."

That impression deepens when you land at Amritsar. For, while the mid-morning March temperature is more like a May day in Alberta, the land looks much the same. But I cannot stop just yet, at Amritsar, for I am on my way to Kashmir to keep a date with the Prime Minister—Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah.

We land at Jammu, the winter capital of Kashmir, and a tall grave-faced, slim, blue-turbaned officer drives me to the government guest house.

There is one other guest—a young American lady tourist, determined to get to Srinagar. But the planes have been held up for several days by the heavy snow. I almost have to pinch myself, in the cool air here, to remember that only a week ago I was literally boiling in Bombay.

YOU NEED TWO Blankets to sleep here in Jammu, but the sun is warm, even in the early morning.

Sharp at 10 I am ushered in to see "Sheikh Sahib," as everybody calls him here. The Prime Minister's official home, looks out over the Tawi River, and the ripple of the rushing water, with birds roaring overhead, gives an air of peace and cheerfulness to the place.

I have met the Sheikh briefly two or three times before in Delhi, but we deliberately arranged the interview here. Firstly, I wanted to hear all sides of the Kashmir question before coming here and to study the documents. Secondly, things always look different when you are discussing them on the spot than they do from far away.

THE SHEIKH TOLD ME THAT the plans for Kashmir's Constituent Assembly are going ahead fine. He expects the elections to take place in late June or early July, 1951. There will, he regrets, be no elected representatives from that part of Kashmir which is held by the Pakistan army. (About one-quarter the population.)

The legal power to rule Kashmir and Jammu still rests with the Maharajah. But in all the events of the past few years nobody in Kashmir and Jammu (not even the Maharajah) has contested the principle that "all power derives from the people." Thus, even when the Maharajah "acceded" on a limited basis to India, he did so with the clearly-expressed condition that the people themselves should have the final say as to their political destiny.

OUR TALK LASTED 55 MINUTES and we covered a lot of ground. I shall discuss general government and especially Kashmir's land reform program—which is the most advanced in all India—in later articles.

Here I want to sum up what Abdullah, the "Lion of Kashmir," told me about the dispute now before the UN.

First, he says, the Pakistan forces must withdraw from the areas their armies seized. Then the refugees, driven out from their homes, must be restored and rehabilitated. Then—and only then—the Kashmir and Jammu government agrees to the actual holding of a UN plebiscite for the entire area. But he and the other cabinet ministers are quite as insistent as anybody in Pakistan that the whole state must go to Pakistan or stay with India.

SHEIKH ABDULLAH SEEMS sincerely confident that the majority of the people of the state would vote to stay with India. But he is emphatic that the whole government of the whole state will loyally accept the verdict. "If they vote to go with Pakistan I will go, too," he said.

As to Pakistan's demand for the withdrawal of all Indian troops from Kashmir, the Prime Minister of Kashmir says: "No—just look at this map." He showed me how Pakistan could rush in troops in two days, whereas it would take India a month to rebuild the comra-

HEAVY TOLL An average of 1200 bush and forest fires are reported annually in Ontario of which 80 per cent are blamed on human causes.

LETTERBOX

APPRECIATE CAPTAIN

Editor, Daily News:
 Through your columns, I would like to express the thanks of those who took the navigation course this past winter, to Capt. William Koughan, local harbor master. Through Capt. Koughan's diligence, hard work and unfailing good humor, the class arrived at a very successful conclusion, much more so I can assure you, than we, the candidates, had ever hoped for.

Some of us had followed the sea for some time and it was surprising and, at some times, quite disconcerting to find out how little we knew about the rudiments of navigation. To those following the sea, and who have never taken a navigation course, we strongly advocate the taking of such a course, particularly when being in the position of securing the services of such an able instructor in the person of our local harbor master, Capt. "Bill" Koughan.

"GRATEFUL"
 tive military postie, she now holds.

"Once bitten, twice shy," was his motto.

How does Kashmir know that tribesmen or even the Pakistan army would not again sweep in?

THE PRIME MINISTER OF Kashmir is now 45 years old, tall, keen. Without his fur Kashmir hat he looks like a typical American business man. He wears a tiny wisp of a black moustache. He is a man who knows what he is doing. He was eight times in jail—but in jail and in public office he has stood for exactly the same things. He has actually delivered—not just talked.

My own impression of "Sheikh Sahib" is that he is sincere, bold. I, personally, would surely accept his word on a plebiscite at face value.

If the UN really wants a plebiscite on Kashmir, they can do no better than to follow the general plan outlined by him, maybe with minor modifications. Otherwise, the sooner they forget the whole business the better. For no plan for a plebiscite could be much, if any, more fair.

ANOTHER "DISGUSTED"

Editor,
 Daily News,
 I hope that I will be allowed space in your paper so that I may be able to bring to the attention of Prince Rupert some of the things that are hard to put up with. In a recent issue of your paper someone had a letter signed "Disgusted." This party was right about the complaint of high rents. I have also seen items where certain writers thought that the rents were alright. Does the writer who pays rent at \$30 per month supply his own light and fuel? Does he or she have a small room with only one window and this window is right close to another building, so that you have to have the lights all the time? Maybe that writer is a landlord who too is out for all he can grab.

My wife and I live in an apartment house that is condemned and yet the landlady is allowed to charge just about what she likes. Nothing is done towards cleaning the walls and they are filthy. Yes, I most certainly do believe that Prince Rupert is made up of greedy money grabbers from the working people. It's been a long time since this city has seen so much money, especially since the Cellulose

people moved in. But it isn't all the landlords. It's Mr. and Mrs. Storekeeper too. You buy a few sacks of coal but most of it is coal-dust.

The whole set-up looks like "get all you can while the going is good and give little in return."
 I have travelled a lot from the (Continued on page 4)

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The Wheat Argument

A FEDERAL TREASURY grant of \$65,000,000 to western wheat growers has provided the major political storm of the current parliamentary session—a storm that may erupt again and again.

It was voted on the day Parliament adjourned for the Easter holiday—March 21—after an unprecedented Senate attempt to kill it was beaten back in that chamber.

The debate in both chambers added more than 200,000 words to Hansard records, brought demands that Agriculture Minister Gardiner should resign, and claims that he had implied a breach of faith by the United Kingdom government.

The grant makes possible an 8.3-cents-a-bushel final payment to the growers for wheat they delivered into a five-year wheat pool which the government set up in 1946 to fulfil the four-year Anglo-Canadian wheat agreement. This agreement began operating with the 1946-47 crop year.

Opponents of the vote claimed the wheat growers were getting preferential treatment at the expense of all the taxpayers. Critics of the vote, mainly representing wheat areas, claimed it was not nearly enough.

Government supporters retorted that if all the various forms of aid to Canadian primary industries were taken into consideration this final settlement would not be out of proportion, that it was fair from both angles.

The four-year agreement with the United Kingdom, with the government's five-year pooling plan for stabilizing wheat export prices through operations of the Canadian Wheat Board, made up such a complicated situation that it was difficult to weigh and balance the various charges and countercharges at Ottawa, let alone here at Prince Rupert where our interest in agricultural problems—wheat at least—is indirect.

The net result is that—with the 8.3-cent payment—the growers will finally have received approximately \$1.83 for each of the 1,435,955,510 bushels of wheat delivered and sold during the pooling period.

During that period there were times when the world price was much higher. Had the situation been reversed, however, and the bottom had fallen out of the world wheat market, the Canadian grower would have been protected by a guaranteed floor price.

Though actually set up in 1946 the pool was made retroactive to the summer of 1945. This was because 1945-46 production was needed to fill British requirements in the first year of the contract—1946-47. The pool, and the contract, both expired July 31 last year.

ANIMAL RARITY
CORNWALL, Ont. (CP)—A big black squirrel, considered a rarity in eastern Ontario, was caught recently near Williams-town. The animal was captured on the farm of Mr. and Mrs. Aime Richer by their two sons.

SPOTTED FROM AIR
ROSETOWN, Sask. (CP)—Homer Merritt and Gordon Wickett, hunting coyotes by airplane, reported sighting a herd of 125 antelope south of McGe and 47 mule deer in the Harris bushland near here.

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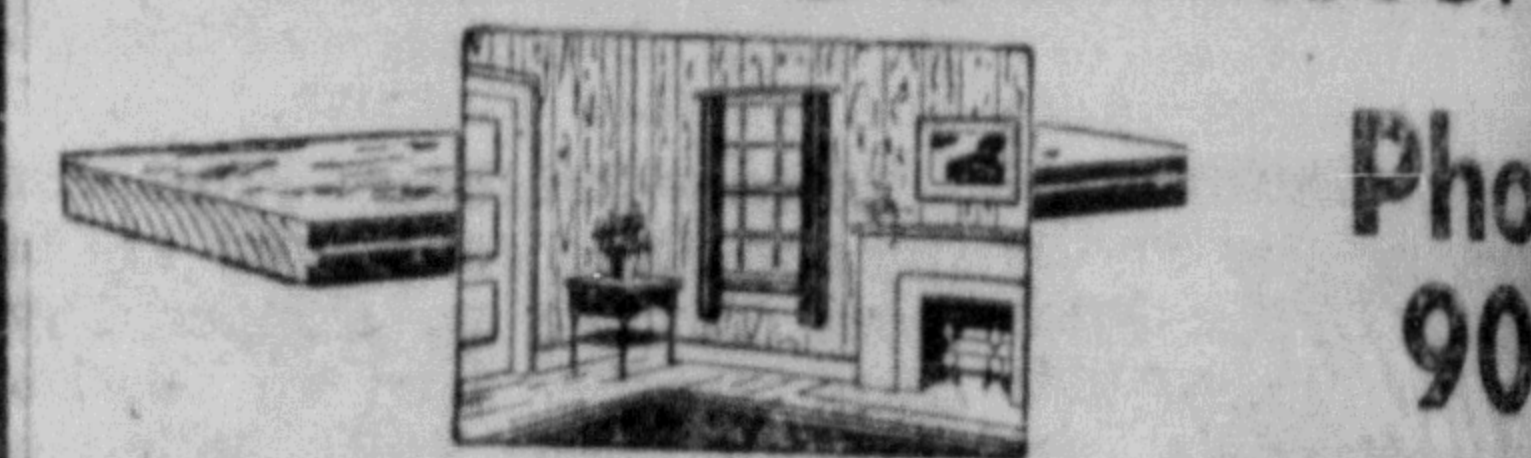
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