



**SIR FRANCIS HUMPHRYS, K.B.E.**

*When AMANULLAH had to cut his Cabul  
And down his sceptre (that precarious bauble),  
You just sat tight and saw the business through  
Till everybody else had flown but you.*

*And now you go to play the gentle despot,  
With what they call a mandate, out in Mesopot,  
Land of great rivers—none that you'll appraise  
Like that dear Severn of your Shrewsbury days.*

MR. PUNCH'S PERSONALITIES.—CVII.



## KING OF AFGHANS

### GREAT LONDON WELCOME

(British Official Wireless.)

RUGBY, March 13.

The King and Queen of Afghanistan, who have been staying incognito in Paris since their return from Berlin, left yesterday afternoon for Calais, where they spent the night. They had an imposing official reception and wonderful popular welcome when they arrived in England to-day.

From the middle of the English Channel to Dover four British destroyers escorted the steamer Maid of Orleans, in which their Afghan Majesties came from France, while overhead flew five fighter aeroplanes. As the Maid of Orleans entered Dover Harbour the guns of Dover Castle thundered forth a Royal salute. Waiting on the quay was the Prince of Wales, wearing the uniform of the Welsh Guards. With the Prince were Field-Marshal Allenby, Lieut.-Colonel Sir Francis Humphreys, British Minister at Kabul, the Afghan Minister in London, and the British suite to be attached to their Afghan Majesties.

As soon as the vessel had been made fast the Prince of Wales approached the gangway and welcomed King Amanullah and Queen Souriya, while the band played the Afghan National Anthem. After inspecting the Guard of Honour, their Majesties listened to an address of welcome presented by the Mayor and Corporation of Dover. The Mayoress handed Queen Souriya a bouquet of red and white roses, and the Queen bowed her thanks.

After the reception at Victoria Station and the ceremonial reception at Buckingham Palace, the Royal visitors left by motor-car to pay homage at the Cenotaph. Then, stepping back a few paces, the Afghan King stood for a moment bareheaded and bowed.

The King and Queen proceeded to Westminster Abbey, where a wreath was laid on the grave of the Unknown Warrior. Afterwards they drove to St. James' Palace, where a deputation of the London County Council and Westminster City Council presented addresses.

This evening a State banquet is being given in honour of King Amanullah and Queen Souriya at Buckingham Palace. It will take place in a brilliant setting. The light from gold candelabra will illuminate the banquet hall, and the famous gold plate has been brought from Windsor Castle for the occasion. The King's bodyguard of Yeoman of the Guard, forming a cordon around, will give a medieval touch to the scene.

### LABOUR ELECTIONS

## AN EPIC OF THE AIR

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Some time between  
1922-28



N ZEALAND HERALD.

## DANGER IN AFGHANISTAN.

### THE BRITISH LEGATION.

#### MINISTER AND HIS STAFF.

#### COURAGE AND FORTITUDE.

British Wireless. RUGBY, Feb. 4.  
In the House of Commons to-day Colonel Howard Bury, Conservative member for Chelmsford, asked the Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, about reports to the effect that Sir Francis Humphrys, British Minister in Afghanistan, and his staff, were to be withdrawn from Kabul. The member asked whether, in view of the importance of maintaining a British Minister there and the facility with which in case of danger he could be withdrawn by air, Sir Austen would continue to maintain the Legation and the staff.

Sir Austen replied that subordinate members of the Legation staff and other persons, both British and foreign, whose continued presence in Kabul was not essential had been, or were being, withdrawn. The question of the withdrawal of the British Minister and his staff must depend upon circumstances.

The Minister said he could not make any statement in anticipation of the decision that might finally be taken on the question, but the removal by air of even a small number of persons might very well prove to be by no means an easy matter.

On behalf of the Government, Sir Austen expressed its admiration for the courage and fortitude which Sir Francis Humphrys and his staff had displayed in circumstances of great difficulty and danger. A similar tribute was due to Lady Humphrys and other ladies who were withdrawn some time ago.

Sir Francis Humphrys, British Minister at Kabul, to whom and to whose staff Sir Austen Chamberlain paid a tribute for their courage and fortitude, is a son of the late Rev. Walter Humphrys and his wife, Nellie, daughter of the Rev. A. F. Boucher, of Worcester, England. Sir Francis is a nephew of Mr. Percy F. Boucher, of Kumeu, North Auckland. After serving in the South African War, first in the Worcestershire Yeomanry and then in the mounted infantry, Sir Francis joined the 25th Punjab, and after a year with his regiment he was attached to the Political Department, where the greater part of his service has been spent on the north-west frontier of India. He had the responsibility and honour of entertaining the present King when His Majesty toured those parts. The King presented him with a gold watch as a mark of his appreciation of his services.

In 1917 Sir Francis served in the Great War as a pilot in the Royal Air Force. After the Armistice he was appointed Political Officer of the Khyber, and then Deputy Foreign Secretary at Delhi in charge of the negotiations at Kabul, and from there naturally to Kabul as Minister in 1922. He speaks and can understand Pushtu and Persian well, which he mastered before the Great War when serving on the north-west frontier as Political Agent. Kabul, when he got there, was a hot-bed of political intrigue, but his knowledge of the Eastern mind and languages, combined with his courtesy, good temper and patience, gained the trust and confidence of the King. The Queen welcomed Lady Humphrys, as she can converse in Pushtu also.

When the British Legation was destroyed by fire some time ago Sir Francis was absent, and a Bolshevik agent is reported to have said: "A most unfortunate escape. I wish he had been burned to death with all his staff."

1929.

the company.

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...London Trades Council. From 1942 until the end of the war he was Deputy Regional

ing swim.

He married, in 1926, Elsie Olive Reid and they had one son.

*Sept 10 1941 The Times*  
**SIR FRANCIS HUMPHRYS**

A correspondent writes:

Your excellent obituary rightly describes Sir Francis as having had a versatile career. He was not only soldier, aviator, administrator, diplomat and company chairman. He was also classical scholar, first class cricketer, happy fly-fisherman, fine shot and entertaining raconteur.

He three times took W. G. Grace's wicket and once, playing for Oxford versus Sussex, that of Ranji. He stood seventh in the first class bowling averages some 70 years ago.

He saw active service in four campaigns.

It was during the third Afghan war, 1919, that he helped sway hesitating tribesmen in the right direction, arriving at the Jāgir by air, at a time when aircraft were rare and unsafe, and making apt use of Pushtoo proverbs: "when the female frog lifts her foot..."

In the war against Hitler he was proud of having formed the British Sugar Corporation, which saved us much shipping, and of playing some part, as chairman of the Iraq Petroleum Company, in easing the flow of petroleum across the desert.

He was one of those who early saw the significance of the aeroplane, and did what he could during the peace to rub it in. It was 70 Squadron RAF who flew 850 beleaguered legation staff of many nations from the snow-covered air strip near Kabul to Peshawar in their Vickers Victorias in 1928-29. Soon afterwards in Iraq it was again 70 Squadron who produced British infantry out of the sky as if by magic to check without bloodshed the Assyrian rebellion. Throughout his seven years in the desert, 1929-35, Sir Francis always travelled by air, usually piloting his own de Havilland Moth, Tiger, Puss and Leopard.

Sir Francis went out of his way to help the neglected, the unlucky, the weak, the old and the inexperienced. He was a strong and just man, favoured by Fortune. He helped to keep the Pax Britannica, like his father-in-law before him.

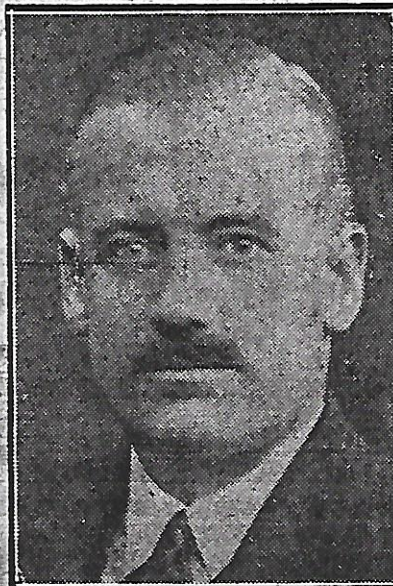
Mr David Whitelaw, novelist, playwright, and inventor of Lexicon and a number of other card games, died on Wednesday, aged 96.

1971

THE NEW ZEALAND HERALD, THURSDAY, MARCH 7

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**FLIGHTS FROM AFGHANISTAN.**

Sir Francis Humphrys (left), British Minister to Afghanistan, who recently left Kabul by aeroplane. Lady Humphrys (right) was among those who flew to India during early hostilities.



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