

## OBITUARY



SYED ABDUL VAHID

With the passing away of Syed Abdul Wahid on 3rd March, 1980 at Karachi, the Forest Service of Pakistan has lost one of its founding architects. Sympathies of the foresters of the country go to his sons and daughters who, during the tenure of the deceased as Chief Conservator of Forests, Sind, Inspector General of Forests, Pakistan and Chief Conservator of Forests, Azad Kashmir, came to be known to them.

Syed Abdul Wahid was born in Ajmer on 30th January, 1898, went to Aligarh in 1920 and to Oxford in 1922 for studying Botany. He was selected in the Indian Forest Service in 1923. He started his career in Central Provinces of India where he held various positions at District level, the notable one being as Silviculturist of the province. He was sent on deputation to Hyderabad Deccan as Inspector General of Forests, where he served from 1942 to 1948. On partition he was appointed as a Chief Conservator of Forests, Sind and subsequently promoted as Inspector General of Forests Pakistan. He held these positions with distinction and retired as Inspector General of Forests in January, 1953. After retirement, he served as U.N. Adviser in Forestry in Rome and Cairo. He also had a brief stint as CCF in Azad Kashmir.

The writer had the privilege of working with Syed Abdul Wahid who, in his capacity of I.G. Forests acted as un-official Adviser to the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs. The aspect of his character that impressed us most was the frank and forthright manner in which he expressed his views. It was a refreshing change from the ways of the bureaucracy which tends to toe the line of the superiors. Syed Abdul Wahid had the courage of conviction which he asserted undauntingly and in a manner that was sometimes cause of embarrassment for his bosses.

As a forester and an academician he was widely known and respected. Among the vast galaxy of his friends and admirers were the elite of bureaucracy and Heads of State. This influence he used largely in promoting the cause of forestry. To him largely goes the

credit for laying the foundations of Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar. But for the single-minded devotion with which he helped this fledgling organization, it could not have survived the buffeting it was subjected to in the early years of its formation.

Though one of the most eminent foresters of Pakistan, Syed Abdul Wahid achieved international recognition as an Iqbalan. His first book: *Iqbal—His Art and thought* (1944) elicited eulogistic comments from Professors A.J. Arberry and Annemarie Schimmel, and drew the attention of such prestigious newspapers as *Times of London*, *Dawn*, *Karachi*, *Newzeland Herald*. His other books are: *Baqiat-i-Iqbal*, *Maqalat-i-Iqbal*, *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal*, *Introduction to Iqbal*, *Naqah-i-Iqbal* and *Glimpses of Iqbal*.

For his translation of *Iqbal and Dante* he was awarded a gold medal by the Government of India, and for his lecture and article '*Iqbal and Italy*', a medal by the Government of Italy. In Pakistan his contribution was recognized by the award of *Sitara-i-Imtiaz* in 1971.

May his soul rest in peace and may God give his next-of-kin the fortitude to bear the loss.

(M. HABIB KHAN)