

Quaid-i-Azam's and Fatima Jinnah's visit to D.I. Khan, 16 April 1948

Mir Ajam Khan*

It was during April 1948, when I was Assistant Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan that Sir Ambrose Dundas, the then Governor NWFP rang up the Deputy Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan to inform him that Quaid-i-Azam along with Miss Fatima Jinnah will visit Dera Ismail Khan on 16th April 1948. They were to land at 8 a.m., and after breakfast, Quaid-i-Azam would grant interviews to about 10 notables of D.I. Khan and before taking off for Peshawar he would like to address the public at the Air field.

The Deputy Commissioner had entrusted me to make all the arrangements for this visit when Quaid-i-Azam and Miss Fatima Jinnah alighted from the aircraft, I was happy to see Quaid-i-Azam walking in brisk steps. We were worried because the Governor had warned us that he was in a delicate health. We took the party straight to the Dining Room of the Circuit House for breakfast. At the breakfast table, Quaid-i-Azam was not eating anything, although Miss Fatima Jinnah who was sitting next to him was coaxing him to eat something. After much hesitation he agreed to have a slice of canned peaches which were luckily available.

After breakfast Quaid-i-Azam was led to a small room at the back of the Dining Room which was converted into a temporary office for his interviews. Miss Fatima Jinnah sat in the Drawing

* This account was sent by Mir Ajam Khan, Retired Civil Servant of Peshawar, Pakistan, in a letter addressed to Director, NIHCR.

Room. Then I took the 10 notables, one by one for ten minutes interview with the Quaid.

When all the interviews were over, I told the Quaid that I had a personal family problem, because my wife had threatened to have a fight with me, if I did not arrange an interview with the Quaid for her. At this the Quaid smiled and asked me to bring her straight away. Within 15 minutes my wife came to the Circuit House and also brought the Deputy Commissioner's wife along with her.

When I brought the two ladies to the Drawing Room I found that the Quaid was still in the office, and Miss Fatima Jinnah was sitting in the Drawing Room with two British lady Doctors from the Mission Hospital Tank. When my wife and the D.C.'s wife went to pay respects to Miss Fatima Jinnah she graciously greeted them and asked the two British lady Doctors to vacate their seats on the sofa and leave the room. Miss Fatima Jinnah asked my wife and the D.C.'s wife sit next to her on the Sofa.

When Quaid-i-Azam came to the Drawing Room he addressed my wife, the D.C.'s wife and myself with the following words: "Now that Pakistan has come into existence, it is for you young people to make it one of the greatest countries of the world as Pakistan has all the natural resources, but you have to work hard and honestly and with unity."

Before boarding the aircraft the Quaid briefly addressed the people who had gathered there. This short speech at D.I. Khan Air field on the 16 April 1948 has been recorded.

We said farewell to the Quaid-i-Azam as he was proceeding to the Aircraft. At that time we did not realize that within five months he will not be with us to guide the destiny of this new born country.