

The man duly arrived, and our effects were gone through once more by the authorities. Letters that had already passed the censor, books that they could not read, even handkerchiefs and linen were pulled out and scrutinized.

On the last day, December 23rd, all our affairs were arranged. Mr BOROVOI, the Russian consul, gave us all necessary papers and did much to facilitate our journey on the other side of the frontier.

In the evening Governor LI gave a farewell dinner. This was rather a hectic affair. Health after health was drunk, and our host was not content until everybody had drunk *kan-pei*, which means »dry cups«. Father VELTMAN also took part in this dinner. Unfortunately, he could not accompany us any farther, for his visa for the Soviet Union had not yet been granted.

BY SLEDGE FROM CHUGUCHAQ TO SERGIOPOL

On Christmas Eve we left Chinese soil behind and drove in the sledges to Bakhty on the Russian side. Mr BOROVOI was kind enough to accompany us in order to facilitate the customs examination. He and I travelled in a light sledge, and got through the Chinese customs with comparatively little trouble; but the others were kept behind for a longer time, and their hand-luggage was examined with the minutest care.

In the Russian customs house in Bakhty the whole of our checked luggage was sealed, some of it to be opened first in Beli-ostrov on the Finnish frontier and the rest at the Chinese frontier in Manchuli. Only a glance was vouchsafed our hand-luggage, and everything went through. Here there was none of the petty suspicion shown by the Chinese customs officials acting under CHIN's orders.

We spent the night in a little Tartar house, where HUMMEL decorated the Christmas table as he had done the year before, and managed to produce a hastily improvised seven-branched candlestick with red candles and Swedish flags. We sat up for long, discussing the prospects of our mission, that we had undertaken three months earlier than we had intended. Professor SIU had his moments of pessimism, as he opined that the government in Nanking might indeed have more important things to worry about than our expedition, and that it might be reluctant to do anything that would cause tension with the new ruler of Sinkiang. Moreover, our committee in Peking might perhaps wish the Chinese members to continue with their work while the Europeans returned home.

On the morning of Christmas Day we were to have made an early start, but neither horses nor sledges were to be seen. The former had been taken to the veterinary, five of them being retained in six hours' quarantine. The authorities were afraid of importing glanders from Sinkiang. Strangely enough, however, Mr BOROVOI was able to shorten this period of quarantine, so that by midday we