

telegrams are forwarded on horseback. A direct road through south-western Afghanistan would shorten the distance to Nushki by more than one-third.

A characteristic feature of the Seistan climate is the *bad-i-sad-u-bist-rus* or the wind of 120 days. It usually commences in the middle of May and lasts all the summer. It is, however, difficult to determine exactly when it commences. The last northerly gale was looked upon as its forerunner. After one or two weeks another storm of one or two days might be expected, followed by ten calm, hot days. Then another more violent storm followed by seven days of calm. Then a third storm with only two days of calm, and at last, when the constant wind had set in, it would blow continuously for two weeks, with an interval of one day's calm when at its height. Then it comes in gusts again before it becomes constant and lasts through four months.

The wind is burning hot and dry, and comes from the north-north-west. The Consulate is therefore built from east to west, and is exposed to the wind, which can pass right through when all the doors and windows are open. But this wind is extremely enervating and depressing, and Captain Macpherson, who had been here two years, thought he could hardly endure a third. But the blast is cooled by setting gratings of wood in the windows, in which leaves and camel-grass are twined and constantly watered. Thus a little coolness is produced in the shady rooms. Once a velocity of 150 feet a second had been recorded by the anemometer, and there is a complete hurricane even when the force of the wind is considerably less than this.

Captain Macpherson and his men had tried in vain to plant trees round the Consulate, in order to modify the heat and light, but the soil is impregnated with salt, and the strong wind prevents their growth. Some small, stunted trees, not sheltered by walls, had grown up at an angle of about 20° from the ground to leeward. Only grass lawns surround the house of the Consulate.

Of course the wind models the alluvial soil when it is dry. But in the Hilmend delta the furrows never sink very deep before fresh floods come. In the Lop-nor basin