

FOCUS ON THE EAST.

There was a royal send-off, though anything but royal weather at London Airport, when the Queen, Princess Margaret and Princess Anne bade goodbye to the Duke of Edinburgh at the beginning of His Royal Highness's tour of the East and the Pacific. Much of that journey will be made on the Comet Four, now awaiting him on the tarmac. The aircraft stewardess is 29-year-old Margaret Hughes.

At Delhi the Duke will represent the British Association at the Indian Science Congress. The Queen, her daughter and Princess Margaret left the aircraft after the farewell. Not till the end of April, when Prince Philip's tour will have covered 36,000 miles, will the Royal Family be re-united. Till then he is leaving our unpleasant winter behind.

The Queen had to wave goodbye from the shelter of the footway. Her people join her in wishing Godspeed to the Princely Ambassador.

Previous arrival at Delhi by air was the President of Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito. President Prasad and Mr. Nehru were there to greet an old friend, for this was Tito's third visit to India, and he and his attractive wife have made a hit with the Indian people of all ranks. Dr. Prasad and Marshal Tito, worlds apart in many ways, have politically one thing in common; neither will align himself with the Communist world, nor with the Western Bloc.

The Indian President's Bodyguard typify that large part of the British inheritance which India has preserved. Premier Nehru believes that a mixture of Eastern and Western ideas is best, not only for his own country but indirectly for the whole world. Holding a balance, India may prevent a too hostile cleavage of the nations east and west.

Japan is thinking less of world politics than of royal romance. Crown Prince Akhito left for the Temple, where he announced to his ancestors his engagement, as religion requires. His Bride-to-be, Michiko Shoda, was instructed in her role as future Empress. As she is a commoner, the marriage will make democratic history in Japan. Michiko received gifts, traditionally made to betrothed girls. The fish symbolise the hope that many sons will bless the union. The engagement is terrifically popular throughout Japan. Now that betrothal ceremonies were completed, Michiko and her parents were entitled to visit the Crown Prince. In April, Michiko will become Crown Princess and all Japan will rejoice.